MYSTERY MAGAZINE

VOL. 1. No 15. JUNE 15 1918. 10 CENTS

AFTER A MILLION

·A·DETECTIVE·STORY·

BY

POLICE·CAPTAIN HOWARD·

"SHADOWING THE BLUE TRIANGLE" IS OUR NEXT FEATURE STORY

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. I JUNE 15, 1918. No. 15

Copyright 1917, by Frank Tousey, Publisher, New York. All rights reserved. Entered as Second-Class Matter November 5, 1917, at the Post-Office at New York, New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879

Published Twice a Month by

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher

168 West 23d Street, New York

N. Hastings Wolff, Pres.
E. Byrne, Treas.
Charles E. Nylander, Sec.

LU. SENARENS, Editor

NOTICE—No letters will be answered or manuscripts returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. The publishers disclaim responsibility for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts Authors must name price wanted for submitted material.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:

Domestic, Single Copy	10 Cents
Domestic, Yearly	$2.50
Canada	$2.75
Foreign	$3.00

All remittances should be sent by express money order, P. O. order, check, registered letter, or draft to insure safety. We will not be responsible for money sent otherwise.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE STORY PAGE
AFTER A MILLION, by Police Captain Howard... 1

SERIAL STORY
THE RENEGADE DETECTIVE, by Randolph Badger 39

SHORT STORIES
THE SACRIFICE, by Beulah Poynter..... 25
THE DUEL IN THE DARK, by Geo. F. Lyon..... 29
THE IRON POT, by J. Irving Alden..... 32
A GAME, by Julian Hawthorne..... 35
PEGGY'S HERO, by Katherine Dangerfield..... 37

MISCELLANEOUS MATTER
NEWEST THINGS 24
RIDDLE OF THE "HEAD OF GOLD"..... 28
LONG BAFFLED SCIENCE..... 34
MAY DAY FESTIVAL OF THE ROMANS..... 38

CURRENT NEWS
Earth Swallows Woman—Our First Medical School—Coal and Concrete—Stock Exchange 126 Years Old—Great Men's Pet Hymns—Wild Birds Called by Barge Whistle—Panama's Great Artificial Lake—Human Tanks In War—How Colors Affect Our Spirits—The Man Who Has "Covered" 17... 42

AFTER A MILLION

A DETECTIVE ROMANCE

By POLICE CAPTAIN HOWARD

CHAPTER ONE

WORKING UP A CASE

At exactly ten o'clock in the morning of a warm May day, the chief of Murray's Detective Agency sat at his desk reading a newspaper, when a tiny red electric bulb on the opposite wall suddenly flared up. It was a signal that some one had entered the outer office. A moment later the office-boy came in with a visiting-card and handed it to Murray. He glanced at it and read the name—Thomas Gordon, No. — Madison avenue, N. Y. Murray recognized the name as that of a wealthy Wall Street banker with whom his firm had once had some financial business.

"Show the gentleman in, Johnny," he said to the boy.

When the little fellow had disappeared, the chief reached under the edge of his desk and pressed a push-button three times, after which he fixed his glance upon the wall ahead and coughed twice. The walls of the office were covered with wainscoting made in panels that reached almost to the ceiling. A few steel engravings detracted from their bareness and a soft velvet rug covering the floor deadened the sound of footfalls. There was one extra chair standing beside the chief's desk, facing the north wall. Nothing about the room indicated the nature of the business transacted there; on the contrary, it looked very much like the ordinary office of some prosperous merchant.

As the door opened the chief caught the reflection of a tall, thin man on the glass of one of the pictures. He had small, ferrety eyes, a gray mustache, bristly side whiskers, was clad in a black frock-coat and carried a silk hat and cane.

"How are you, Murray?" he remarked in harsh, unfriendly tones; and without relaxing the habitual grim expression of his emaciated face, he gingerly shook hands with the detective and seated himself in the vacant chair.

"I've got a job for you," he went on, as he crossed his legs and swept a searching glance around the place. "Last night I was robbed of quarter of a million dollars worth of diamonds."

"Indeed" said the chief inquiringly. "And I presume that you have called for help to find them, Mr. Gordon?"

"Why else would I call here?" snapped the banker disagreebly. "I want you to capture the thief and recover the necklace. It belonged to my niece and ward, Bertha Kingsley. The gems were an heirloom from her mother. You have met Miss Kingsley, if I am not mistaken, haven't you?"

Murray nodded and smiled, as if the recollection were a pleasure.

"Yes, sir," he assented. "Will you kindly give me the details of the robbery? Be as explicit as possible."

"I can tell you very little, Murray. The case seems to be a very simple one. Last night I unlocked the safe in my house, took out Bertha's jewel-case and handed her the necklace with a number of other ornaments. She put them on and went to the opera with me. We returned at twelve o'clock and walked into my library. She took off the jewels, handed them to me, and I returned them to her jewel-case, locked it in the safe, and we retired. The safe is a large, old-fashioned Herring. I am the only one who knows the combination. I memorized the numbers and never committed them to paper. This morning, when I entered the library, I found the safe-doors standing wide open. None of the contents had been disturbed except the jewel-case, which had been taken out, and stood on the center table. Although it contained a number of very valuable rings, pins, bracelets and earrings, only the diamond necklace had been stolen."

"That is rather queer," commented Murray.

"Exactly the way I was impressed. Of course, I was greatly startled, but I kept my own counsel, left the room, locked the door, went down-stairs to my breakfast, and then came here to lay the matter before you."

"Didn't you notify the police?"

"No; I have no faith in them."

"Was the safe forced open?"

"It was opened with the combination."

"What was the condition of your house?"

"The front doors and windows were securely locked and so were the windows and door in the kitchen; but a window in the library was raised about a foot. It is ten feet above the back yard. It is my idea that the burglar entered through that window, as I saw that the rear windows were closed and locked before I retired, and I suspect that the crook opened the safe by the sense of sound and touch. He probably made his exit the same way he entered. I suppose I should have had a burglar alarm attachment on the safe; but it is too late to regret that omission now."

"Have you told anybody about the theft, Mr. Gordon?"

"Not a soul. I have not even mentioned it to Miss Kingsley, or my butler, cook or chambermaid, as I wish above all things to avoid publicity, and do not want to warn the thief that pursuit is coming."

"Quite right of you. Are you going home now?"

"Directly, as I have got to get some business papers before going down to my Wall Street office."

"Then I'll send one of my operatives with you to look over the ground," said the chief. "He is my best man—Joe Martin."

He pressed another button under his desk and a door-sized panel in the wall wainscoting swung open on well-oiled hinges. A middle-aged man stood in the opening. He had been standing behind the panel since he received a buzzer signal from his chief, peeping through a skilfully concealed gimlet-hole and listening to the conversation. Moreover, he had been carefully studying every varying emotion expressed on Thomas Gordon's features.

The banker looked intensely annoyed when his glance fell upon the operative; he resented being spied upon in this adroit manner, but curbed his rising anger and sized up the individual confronting him. He observed a well-set-up man of about thirty, clad in a plain, gray business suit and derby, with a clean-shaven face and mild blue eyes. He had an air of quiet seriousness that made Gordon think he was a harmless sort of person.

"An eavesdropper!" exclaimed the banker in some disgust.

"This method is part of our business, Mr. Gordon," explained the chief apologetically. "It saves my clients the trouble of repeating explanations. Martin knows your story now, and I am confident that he will handle your case with skill and good judgment."

"Oh, all right," said Gordon, gruffly, as he arose and put on his hat. "Come along, Martin, and see what you can do about apprehending the thief. Murray, you may render your bills to me weekly."

And with a curt nod to the chief, Gordon passed out of the office.

Murray cast a querulous glance at Martin.

"Deep and tricky," whispered the operative, as he paused beside his chief. "I'll have to keep my eye on him. Got my bag?"

The chief handed him a small satchel containing some articles he might require, and he preceded the banker down to a waiting taxi in the street and followed him into the vehicle. Martin settled back quietly into a corner. They silently sped up-town. Neither of them uttered a word during the short ride, and they finally alighted before an imposing brownstone house. Gordon dismissed the taxi and ascended the stoop, the banker opening the front door with a latchkey. He led the way through a heavily carpeted hall to a rear door, unlocked it, and strode into his library, followed by the detective.

"Here is the room, and there is the safe," said Gordon brusquely, pointing across the apartment. "Want to ask any questions?"

The officer cast one quick, appraising glance around the room and shook his head negatively.

"Not now," he answered. "I would like to be left alone in here for a few minutes, if you please. Lock the door when you go out."

The banker looked mildly amazed, for he had been expecting to be bombarded with all sorts of ridiculous questions by the detective. He made no comment, however, but left the room thoroughly convinced that the operative was a man who did not understand his business. Locking the door, he went through the hall and vanished.

Left alone in the library, the detective observed that the room was about twenty feet long, fifteen wide, and had a high ceiling, a gilt chandelier and a brand-new green rug on the floor. The suite of furniture was fumed oak, upholstered in green leather. There was a center table upon which Martin set his bag, and in an alcove between two closets stood a large Herring safe, the doors of which were wide open. Rows of bookcases were built around the room, several steel engravings hung on the upper walls, a bronze clock ticked on the mantel, and on each side of it stood two framed photographs. The detective noticed that the folding-doors leading into the front parlor were closed, bolted, and were draped with green velvet portières. At the rear there were two windows hung with shades and curtains, opening on the back yard. One of them was raised about twelve inches, and under it were the footprints of a man on the new-looking rug, leaving dirt tracks.

The detective took a tape-line, some powder, a magnifying-glass, a pencil and notebook from his bag. He then went down on hands and knees, sprinkled the powder on the various footprints he found pressed into the thick nap of the new rug and made tracings and measurements of them.

"The imprints of three different-sized shoes and one of bare feet," he commented, when he had finished this part of his investigation. "I have the direction taken by each set of prints, showing how they moved about this room. Now for a few measurements about the safe."

His tape-line came into play again, after which he examined the window-sill, the furniture, the jewel-case and the surface of the safe, which seemed to have been recently varnished. He now produced several envelopes, a pair of

tweezers and a powerful little microscope. Several minute particles were taken up from the floor, off the sticky surface of the safe and from the splinters in the window-sill, each of which went into the microscope and then were carefully laid away in different envelopes. After that he searched every object in the room for fingerprints, and, having sprinkled the powder on some, he drew a small camera from his bag and photographed them. Several white spots on the rug proved to be red wax candle grease, pieces of which he saved. There was a compact developing outfit in the bag, and as one of the closets was light-tight and contained a basin and running water, he developed his films and hung them up on the draperies with pins to dry. Martin worked swiftly, quietly, but very methodically. With each object registered as a clue, he made an entry in his notebook, so that not the slightest detail would be forgotten.

Joe Martin next went to the window, measured the size of the aperture, raised the sash, and dropped down ten feet into the rear yard. Here he found a set of footprints that correspondent with one set in the library, which he traced backward across the yard to the rear fence. Then he returned to the brick wall of the rear house and keenly scrutinized it beneath the open window. A few particles of a brown substance were picked off the wall and were placed into an envelope, several measurements were taken, and then he walked away from the house. Making a running jump, he caught hold of the window-sill, drew himself up, and clambered back into the library, his investigation practically completed.

Having replaced all his tools and clues in the bag, he went to the hall-door, knocked on the panel, and shouted:

"Mr. Gordon, you may come in."

The banker unlocked the door and joined him with an inquiring look upon his face and a searching glance around the undisturbed room.

"Have you discovered anything?" he demanded.

"I have learned who was in this room," was the quiet reply. "I will attend to the rest of the house when I have rendered my report to you about my findings here."

"Indeed?" said Gordon with a half-sneer. "I suppose you have already located the thief, haven't you?"

"Not quite," was the smiling reply; "but I have located two sets of clues to work on. One of them I have read as cleverly as you could read your newspaper. The other has got me slightly puzzled, but I may fathom it after I have examined the rest of the house and quizzed your servants."

"What have you learned?" asked Gordon impatiently.

"A man came into this room last night through that rear window. I am not sure that he was the thief, but the inference would be that he did not come in here for nothing. Do you want me to give you a fair description of the individual?"

"A description of him," echoed the banker incredulously. "How could you, unless you have seen him?"

"I assure you that I have never met the man in my life; but he was here, and left enough clues behind to make his identification absolutely positive. He came over the rear fence, crossed the yard on a run, made a flying leap and caught the sill of that open window, drew himself up, forced open the window and crawled through into this room. The same party was leaning against that safe and went out into the hall. He did not leave the house the same way he entered it."

A look of interest began to appear upon the banker's hard features.

"Did I understand you to say that you could describe the man?" he asked. "Can you tell me what he looked like?"

"I can not only describe his appearance, but I can tell you a few things about the fellow's character," replied the detective decisively. "He was, as near as I can judge, a short, slim chap, say about five feet six in height, weighing approximately 125 pounds. I imagine he was somewhere around forty years of age, with black hair tinged with gray, dark eyes, and of a quick, nervous temperament. He wore a black felt hat, a black cheviot suit. No. 6 gloves and a pair of No. 6 patent leather shoes. His right eye was blind, or else the sight was impaired. His hands were slim and delicate-looking, but he was very strong and athletic. There is a crescent-shaped scar on the palm of his right hand. He is left-handed, smokes cigarettes and is——"

"Say," interrupted Gordon, "how do you know all this?"

Joe smiled, did not answer the question, but said:

"If you will permit me to resort to psychology in my deductions I will add that the man has traveled a great deal, has endured considerable trouble in his life, is subject to violent neuralgic headaches and has been married and widowed twice. He is a very good-hearted fellow, has one child, and is liable to die a sudden and violent death."

"See here," interrupted the banker again, "you are stringing out a number of accusations that need explanation."

The detective smiled again and shrugged his shoulders.

"In my profession," he replied, "one must work out a set of clues on a theoretical basis until circumstances are proven by plain facts. I will give you the principle of my deductions, if you wish me to."

"Proceed," said Gordon, who now seemed to be fascinated by the officer's remarks, and he looked at the detective expectantly.

CHAPTER TWO

EXPLODING A THEORY

THE detective sat down beside the center table, upon which stood the jewel-case from which the necklace had been stolen. He felt that he was under sharp criticism; but that fact did not trouble him in the least.

"In my business," he remarked, "we are obliged to analyze the most trifling-looking objects, for they sometimes prove to be of inestimable value in the way of clues. Theories are called into play and deductions are made from absolute facts as well as from superficial evidence. In this particular case I have my clues, my facts and a hypothesis. In the first place, I have found that a man, as his footprints prove, climbed over the rear fence some time during last night. The wind blowing particles of dust in his footprints, show that they had been impressed in the ground for several hours. Freshly made footprints would contain little or no foreign substances. There is only one set of these footprints, the toes coming from the back fence and pointing toward the rear of this house. There are none pointing from the house going toward the fence, which proves conclusively that the night prowler entered the house but did not retreat the way he came in. Measurements showed me that these footprints were made by a No. 6 shoe, narrow width, left by a man. The size of the shoe indicates a small, slim man. This man's height is shown by the distance from the floor, at which he left some fingerprints on the sticky, new varnish on the safe when he leaned against it; and a man of that height should weigh about 125 pounds. Besides this, the window, being open no more than twelve inches, shows that a slim person passed through it, unless he closed down the sash after he got into this room."

Mr. Gordon eyed the officer narrowly and shook his head in assent.

"That seems plausible," he muttered; "but how do you account for your assertion that he was about forty years old and of a quick, nervous temperament?"

"His footprints in the soil outside are short and dig down at the toes, a style of step invariably used by a person of the sort I have mentioned. Haven't you ever noticed that nervous people take short, quick steps, and wear out their shoes at the tips? Slow, phlegmatic people usually take slow, wide steps, and come down flat-footed. Pompous individuals grind down the backs of their heels."

"But his age—his age?" persisted the banker.

"I said he was about forty—the age at which most people's hair begins to turn gray—and that he leaned against the safe. Several of his black hairs, tinged with gray,

adhered to the varnish on the safe. Dark eyes generally accompany black hair, although, of course, many blue-eyed people have black hair. But it is fair to assume that his eyes were dark."

"It's a guess; but we will let it pass, for I am curious to know him; you knew that one of his eyes was affected, that he had a scar on the right hand and that he possessed enormous strength."

"His footprints curved slightly to the left, which showed that he was favoring a healthy left eye. If you shut one eye and attempt to walk, you will find that your steps will incline toward the side from which you can see best. There is an imprint of his right palm on the safe and a crescent-shaped break in the ridges and loops of the skin, showing where he once cut himself. When he ran and leaped at the window-sill, ten feet up from the yard, and caught hold of the sill, he wore gloves, as he left no fingerprints there; but his power was called into play when he drew up his hanging body by sheer muscular strength, so that he could open the window from the outside."

The banker grunted.

"Can you qualify your declaration that he wore a No. 6 glove?"

"Easily. His shoe was a six, and a man invariably wears the same size glove as his shoe. The safe-prints of a right hand pressed against it tells me that if he worked the combination he must have done it with his left hand, proving him to be left-handed. Of course, he must have taken off his gloves when he got in here, else his fingerprints would not have been left on the varnish covering the safe. Now, as to his clothes. I have in my possession a number of infinitesimally small fragments of black felt, taken from the outer surface of the safe, which showed me the material of his hat; and as there is a broad, flat impression pushed into the varnish, I inferred that a soft brim made it. Tiny particles of black cheviot stuck on splinters on the window-sill explain the kind of cloth his suit was made of, and fragments of patent leather adhering to the brick wall outside the open window describe the kind of shoes he wore."

"What did you mean by psychological deduction, Mr. Martin?"

"I am a student of the occult. Palmistry has always interested me, and I became quite proficient at reading the lines of the hand. The additional deductions I mentioned were merely the result of a reading I gave the lines of the palm imprinted on the safe."

"Well, I am not superstitious enough to believe in any such rubbish as occult sciences," growled the banker, "but I must confess that you have made a most remarkable diagnosis of this case. Your explanation of how the prowler got in is correct; your description of his appearance, defects, scars, dress, strength and condition are right in every particular. But your deductions have not got us anywhere toward catching the thief. I will verify your report."

He opened the hall-door and shouted roughly:

"Tomkins!"

"Yes, sir," replied a sepulchral voice in the hall.

"Put on your hat and gloves and come in here."

The sound of quick, nervous footsteps sounded in the hall, and a short, thin man in a black felt hat, a black cheviot suit and a pair of patent leather shoes about No. 6 came into the library, pulling a pair of gloves on his small, delicate but strong-looking hands. He had black hair, tinged with gray, a cataract on his right eye, and looked exactly the sort of man that Martin had described.

"My butler," Mr. Gordon announced sarcastically. "Yesterday he varnished the safe and used his left hand to lean against the safe-door, as he is left-handed. It was then that his handprints were stamped on the varnish. Last night he was out late, without his latchkey, and, fearing to awaken us, he got over the back fence and in through the rear window. All this he explained to me when you sent me out in the hall. When he got in through the window he went right up-stairs to bed. If you say that Tomkins is the thief, I would not believe you under oath, for he has been in my employ since his second wife died, ten years ago, leaving him to care for a little daughter; and in all that time I have had Tomkins he has never been known to commit a dishonest deed. So now, Mr. Detective, who stole that necklace?"

Joe Martin was staggered. All the fine lines of the web he had been so painstakingly weaving around the mysterious night prowler were shattered in an instant and left him completely in the dark about the identity of the thief. It humbled his pride and made him feel decidedly uncomfortable to find the eyes of the millionaire fixed upon him gloatingly; but he was too wary a diplomat to allow this defeat to show in his immobile face. He began to think hard and fast, at the same time smiling back at the banker with cool indifference.

"I hope, sir," he remarked after a brief interval of silence, "that you have not forgotten what I told you about finding two sets of clues?"

This was a staggerer for Mr. Gordon. His face lengthened, and a dark frown gathered on his brow as he recalled to mind the detective's remark.

"Why, yes, of course," he stammered reluctantly.

"My first theory is exploded. I freely admit it," Martin went on. "You cannot deny that my deductions were correct, and my description of the man and his movements exactly as they actually were."

"No question about that, but it has done nothing to solve the mystery of the thief's identity; and now that I have vindicated Tomkins, I suppose you will throw up the job and acknowledge that you are defeated."

"Why, no," smiled Joe blandly. "I am not going to do that. The vindication of the butler has simply eliminated one factor in the case and rendered my task much simpler. It reduces my work to an analysis of the second series of clues I mentioned to you. They are far more interesting than the first set, although decidedly more meager. In order to work intelligently, I must interview your servants, your niece, and get the fingerprints of all hands, after which I mean to examine this house from top to bottom, with your permission. I am satisfied that the clue to the criminal lies in one or more of these rooms, Mr. Gordon."

"You will have to eliminate Miss Kingsley," said the banker sharply. "I told you before that I did not mention the theft to her and do not want the dear child to know anything about it."

"Will you introduce me to her?"

"No; but I will show you her portrait. In it she is wearing the missing necklace, and you can get a good view of the ornament in the picture. That will be far better than a verbal description."

He took one of the frames from the mantelpiece and handed it to the operative, with the remark:

"This is my niece."

The frame was a narrow gilt affair, containing the portrait of a girl of about twenty. It was a bust picture, and was rather large. The detective saw that the girl was a decided brunette, with a soft oval face, a low forehead and large brown eyes. Her shapely nose was slightly aquiline, her mouth was small and prettily curved at the corners, and her dark, wavy hair was dressed upon the crown of a regally poised head. At the first cursory glance she impressed the beholder with the idea that she was one of those characters who take everything seriously, and yet there was a laughing expression about the innocent eyes and a mischievous something showing in every feature.

"What a beautiful girl!" the officer exclaimed involuntarily.

He was tremendously interested in that girlish face—more so than he had ever been before in any human creature. He gazed at the picture so long and interestedly that the old man, who was watching him keenly, remarked in dry tones:

"I hope you have impressed the appearance of that necklace upon your mind by this time, Martin."

"The necklace—oh, yes!" said Joe, startled out of the pleasant dream into which he had inadvertently fallen, and he hastily fastened his gaze upon the ornament encircling her neck.

It was a magnificent piece of jewelry, consisting of five rows of large diamonds strung on gold wire and fastened

together. The pendant was a massive diamond the size of a nickel, slightly darker than the rest, its outer edge encompassed within a fine rim of gold filigree of such a singular pattern that one would not be likely to forget it.

"Is there a clasp at the back of the girl's neck?" he asked, looking up at last. "Has it any marks of identification?"

"The clasp is a small gold, octagonal plaque," answered Gordon. "On the inner surface is engraved the initials of Bertha Kingsley's great-grandmother, B. K., and the date, 1774."

"It would be a very easy matter to recognize the ornament if it is left intact," remarked the detective; "but to keep my memory refreshed, it will be safer to allow me to retain this picture a while, Mr. Gordon."

"I have no objections, provided you will return it when you finish using it. You can see what a valuable necklace it was."

The officer nodded and put the picture in his bag. He then drew out several pieces of dark-surfaced paper, a pencil and his note-book.

"That will do for the ornament," he said. "Now we will begin on the fingerprints and the footprints of this household. Here is a sheet for the hand, which I am laying on the edge of the table. Just press your fingers down upon it, then take off your shoe and stocking, and press your right foot upon this other piece."

"Me?" asked the surprised banker.

"Why, certainly. Not that I suspect you of being the thief, but just to induce the servants to give me their prints without objecting. If they know that their master has submitted to the indignity they will not hesitate to give me theirs — don't you see?"

"That is reasonable. I will call them in so they can see me doing it, and they will then know that there is no humbug about my sharing their humiliation. Perhaps after all you may thus gain a clue to the real culprit. Just wait a moment."

He sent Tomkins for the cook and chambermaid. When they arrived the detective saw at a glance that neither of the women were dishonest. But to bear out his calling, he questioned them closely, while the printing was going on, and soon ascertained that neither of the pair knew anything about the burglary, nor did they betray any signs of guilt.

The detective placed the prints in his bag, to be studied later, and then made a tour of the basement floor, leaving all the household in the library so they could not interrupt his investigation. He carried his bag with him. When he returned to the parlor floor he noticed that Mr. Gordon had left the key of the library in the key-hole, and, gliding up to the door, he softly turned it, locking them in the room. This done, he went down on hands and knees, with an electric pocket flashlight and his powder and type-line, examining the carpet for tracks. Some of the clues which he had found in the library were shown faintly but legibly, and he traced them to the stairs and up to the next floor.

As he gained the upper hall he was suddenly startled by hearing the swish of a silk shirt in the semi-darkness, and sinking into the obscurity of a door-niche he crouched against the woodwork. The next instant the door softly opened, and as he cautiously peered around the frame he caught sight of a female figure gliding out of the rooms. The light was very dim, but he managed to see that she was of medium size, wore an expensive and stylish costume, a small hat, and was closely veiled. Indeed, the veil was so thick and dark that he could not distinguish any of her features. He saw her lay a daintily gloved hand on the banister as she leaned over in a listening attitude, much as if she were trying to hear what was going on down-stairs. There was something so mysterious and suspicious about her actions that the detective's curiosity was aroused to the fever-point. He wondered who she was and what she was intent upon doing.

"I want no less than fifty thousand dollars," Miss Kingsley answered, looking at Omar anxiously.

The girl, for her figure proclaimed her youth, waited a full minute and then thrust a small parcel down the bosom of her waist, after which she closely buttoned her jacket and then felt of her veil, as if to assure herself that it was fastened on securely. The next moment she went tiptoeing cautiously down the stairs, glancing about furtively and listening hard every few moments.

Joe glided to the head of the stairs, watching her closely. He saw her gain the lower hall, and after another swift glance around, she quietly opened the front door, went out, and disappeared.

The detective darted after her, and as he opened the front door and peered into the street he caught sight of the girl just in the act of boarding a Madison avenue car at the corner. He rushed down the steps, swung himself upon the rear platform of the same car, and was carried down-town.

Remaining on the rear platform of the car, the detective peered in through the glass window and saw the girl raise her veil to wipe the perspiration from her forehead. As the weather was cool, he inferred that her warmth had been occasioned by the excitement of getting out of the house under a nervous strain of mental excitement.

With her features exposed to view, he saw that she was Bertha Kingsley; but it did not occasion any surprise, as he had suspected her identity from the first moment he saw her in the hall. But her mysterious actions

perplexed him. He figured that she had either gained an inkling that he was in the house, or else she was trying to avoid her guardian. By following her, he hoped to learn the meaning of her peculiar actions.

CHAPTER THREE

THE $50,000 LOAN

BERTHA carefully replaced her veil and remained immovable until the car reached East Thirty-fourth street, where she alighted. Pausing on the corner, she drew a sheet of newspaper from her hand-satchel, scanned its columns, tossed it away, and walked leisurely up the street. Joe had alighted just behind her, stood at the show-window of a store, pretending to look in, and watched her reflection in the glass. The moment her back was turned toward him, he snatched up the paper she had thrown away. He cast a hasty glance at it, and seeing a marked advertisement he thrust the paper in his pocket, then followed after her at a safe distance. His perplexity was greatly increased, for the advertisement which she had marked was that of a well-known pawnbroker, who catered principally to women. As the girl was reputed as being enormously wealthy, he could not understand what reason she could possibly have to call on a money-lender. He saw her finally pause before one of those old-fashioned brownstone houses which had been converted into a business building. Over the windows on the parlor floor hung a sign, upon which was lettered "Omar & Co., Money Lent."

Miss Kingsley ascended the iron steps leading to the front door, passed inside, and disappeared. The detective followed her in. He reasoned that if she knew him by sight she would show it by her actions when she saw him; consequently secrecy now was out of the question. He knew the old Syrian money-lender who conducted this establishment as well as he was acquainted with the rest of the pawnbrokers in the city.

Omar was standing behind a counter in the parlor-like room, a skullcap on his long head, a pair of brass spectacles on the end of his huge nose, his hands clasped on his breast as he peered over the rims of his glasses at Miss Kingsley, who was speaking to him.

"A private room?" he was saying. "Certainly, madam. Step through that door into the rear apartment, where you will have all the privacy you may want. I—ah—how do you do?" He nodded to Joe.

The girl turned swiftly, sizing up the officer from head to foot searchingly, her large dark eyes glittering behind the veil, and the officer covertly watched her for some sign of recognition; but she showed none.

Abruptly turning on her heel, she went through the door, closed it, and the detective raised his finger to his lips warningly to Omar. The old man's face was almost buried in an unkempt gray beard, out of which his crafty little eyes twinkled like ferrets.

"Well?" he whispered as the detective reached him.

"I am shadowing her," whispered Joe, jerking his thumb in the direction of the closed door. "I must know what she is doing here."

"Is she a crook?"

"No; her name is Bertha Kingsley. She is worth millions. Her uncle is Thomas Gordon, the banker. Do you happen to know him?"

"I know all about him, Mr. Martin."

"Will you fix me up?"

"Certainly; walk down the hall to the rear door, go into the small room adjoining the one she occupies, and in the wall you will find a listening-hole, through which you can also peer. Here's the key."

He handed the officer a small key, which he took from a nail.

"Yes, I know. I have used it before, you may recollect."

The old Syrian nodded wisely, then a troubled expression began to overspread his face as he asked in a tremulous whisper:

"Is this going to interfere with any business I might do with her?"

"No; you are at liberty to do business with the girl. This is not a criminal case—merely a family matter. I will perhaps explain later on."

Omar took off his skullcap.

Joe left the office, walked down the outer hall softly until he reached the door in the wall on the right-hand side, and, inserting the key in the lock, he opened it and passed into a small, closet-like space, lighted by a small, dirty skylight in the ceiling. On other occasions he had used this place to spy upon people in the private room, and knew just where to look for the hole. It opened behind a picture that hung on the wall of the next room—a life-sized oil-painting of a man, out of which the iris of both eyes had been cut. By pressing his face against the back of the picture he could hear all that was said and could see everything that happened in the room without being discovered, unless the watched person happened to notice the life-like look of the picture's eyes. The detective hastily but noiselessly got himself into position and beheld a small room containing a few chairs, a table counter and a safe behind it, before which Omar was standing. Miss Kingsley was seated before the table, with her back turned to the officer.

"I have called here to get a loan," she was saying hesitatingly. "I need a large sum of money—a very large sum; but I can give you an enormously valuable piece of jewelry as security for the money."

"It is my business to lend money on good security, madam," answered Omar smilingly. "How much money do you desire?"

"I want no less than fifty thousand dollars," Miss Kingsley answered, looking at Omar anxiously. "Can you lend as much as that?"

Joe saw by the startled expression that swept over the Syrian's bewhiskered face that he was shocked by the size of her demand. He bent toward the young lady an incredulous look, and asked:

"Haven't you made some mistake about the amount, madam?"

"Why, no," she answered. "That is the precise sum I must have."

"Well, I can loan as much as that, of course, but it would have to be on gilt-edge security, worth no less than three times the amount I give."

"My pledge is worth more than five times what I ask, sir."

"It seems ridiculous. Let me see this marvelous jewel."

Miss Kingsley shoved her hand down the bodice of her waist, drew out a small parcel wrapped in a common piece of newspaper, and opened it on the table. The pawnbroker started forward, uttering a suppressed exclamation of astonishment, and bent far over to closely examine the pledge.

It was as much as Joe could do to prevent himself from crying out, for the object she was trying to pawn was the diamond necklace which had been stolen from Thomas Gordon's safe the night before.

But as it belonged to Miss Kingsley, he realized that he could not do anything to interfere, for she had a perfect legal right to dispose of her own property in any manner she saw fit.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" Omar could not help crying, as he picked up the beautiful ornament and glared at it diamond by diamond, until he had counted every one of them. He swiftly appraised their value. The big pendant, blazing and scintillating like an electric light, seemed to fascinate him. Then he seized a jeweler's magnifier, stuck it in his eye, and carefully scrutinized each stone in turn again. His skilful and experienced eyes told him that these gems were all genuine, that they were collectively worth at least a quarter of a million dollars—that the loan of a paltry fifty thousand dollars on them was a very safe investment.

The girl sat watching him silently and breathlessly.

"Well," she asked at length, "are you satisfied?"

Omar laid the necklace on the table and studied the girl intently.

"Are you of age?" he asked. "Are you the owner of this necklace?"

"Why, certainly. I am twenty-one, and the jewel belongs to me. I inherited it from my father, who was a Wall Street banker. His name was Cyrus Kingsley. I am living at No. — Madison avenue with my uncle, Thomas Gordon, who was my father's business partner. Do you know of my family?"

"Oh, yes. I am satisfied of your identity, age and right to pawn this necklace; but I do not want to get into any trouble by advancing you the money, if there is anything irregular about the matter. I want to satisfy myself that it is all right to accept the pledge on account of its enormous value. I suppose you have no objection to my calling up your uncle on the phone to question him about it?"

A look of terror flashed over Miss Kingsley's face, and she sprang to her feet, trembling with excitement.

"No, no!" she exclaimed vehemently. "I do not want you to mention this matter to Mr. Gordon at all!"

"And why not, if it is an honest transaction?"

"Simply because I do not wish him to know anything about my private affairs," she answered. "There is nothing illegal in my wanting to pawn this bauble, for it belongs to me and I have a right to do as I please with my own property. I have a very potent reason for wishing Mr. Gordon to know nothing of my affairs—understand? If you do not wish to advance the money on my own terms, you can hand back the necklace and I will take it to a more accommodating broker."

Omar was impressed with her earnestness and indignation. It was very evident to him that she was justified in her remarks. He had no right to pry into her personal business. By accepting the pledge he knew that he could make over $1,600 interest a year out of it, and he did not mean to allow any conscientious scruples to interfere with his getting so much money out of a responsible patron. He therefore assumed a more conciliatory tone, as he answered:

"Oh, there is no need of getting angry about my caution. It is none of my business if you do not want your uncle to know anything about this transaction. I will lend you the required amount. Excuse me a moment while I weigh this necklace."

Miss Kingsley smiled and shrugged her shoulders. She turned around while the pawnbroker was examining the necklace and weighing it on a jeweler's scale, her eyes roving around the little room. The oil-painting behind which the detective was concealed caught her attention, and she rested her glance upon it in an abstracted manner. She was gazing squarely into the detective's living eyes, and he instantly fixed them in a glassy stare and made an effort to prevent himself from winking, but failed. She saw the eyes of the picture close and open, swift as the movement was. A pallor overspread her face, for she realized that there was something uncanny in an inanimate picture having the propensities of a human being, and involuntarily she arose and took a step nearer, staring up at it unbelievingly. At such close range she could not possibly make any mistake about the eyes being those of a human being, and her keen vision detected the ragged edges of the canvas where the painted eyes had been cut out. All the blank staring the detective could do was unavailing now. While a sensation of intense chagrin overwhelmed him, he could not help admiring her sharpness.

"Mr. Omar," she exclaimed in icy tones, as she turned to the money-lender, "what is your object in having a hidden spy watching us?"

Omar faced her with an air of injured innocence.

"A spy?" he echoed. "I do not quite understand your allusion."

She pointed scornfully at the eyes glittering in the picture.

"There's a man concealed behind that thing," she remarked dryly. "The eyes in the picture are decidedly human. They are watching me."

The pawnbroker was quick-witted, for he laughed and shrugged his shoulders in a deprecating manner and said:

"What a discerning young lady you are, to be sure! But it is all right; do not be alarmed. That is only one of my clerks. In my business one cannot trust strangers who come in here, for I carry a large sum of money in this safe. I have to have a guard in case I am attacked by any unscrupulous person who might have designs to rob me. Don't you know that nearly all jewelers have a clerk watching every customer to see that nothing is pilfered? It pays to be careful, you know."

"Oh," she answered, seemingly relieved, "I understand. At first I was offended; but I hope my call here will be kept confidential."

"My dear young lady, unless you were seen coming in, or going out of this establishment, no one will ever learn from any of us about your call. Depend upon our discretion, for we would ruin our business if we were to expose our customers to inquisitive people."

This answer seemed to satisfy Miss Kingsley, and she turned her glance up at the picture on the wall, but now saw no eyes there. Joe had withdrawn, as his location was known, and she would now be careful of all she said and did; but he listened behind the two staring holes in the picture's eyes that were now confronting the young lady, and heard her say:

"The spy is gone."

"Exposed, what's the use of him remaining?" asked Omar smilingly.

"Well, how about the money?"

"Wait; I must make a ticket for you, then I'll count out the bills. I will have to hand you banknotes of large denomination, such as hundreds and a few of a thousand apiece."

"I am not particular about that, Mr. Omar."

Peeping, Joe saw him give her the ticket and the money, and she wrapped the banknotes in paper and took her departure. He picked up her trail in the street and saw her hail a white-and-black taxi, into which she stepped, and it started off toward Broadway. There was a window in the rear, so to avoid being seen shadowing her he boarded a car and rode in security as the cab kept the same pace as the car.

At Broadway and Thirty-fourth street he alighted, and, engaging a public taxi, he sent it rushing down Broadway in pursuit of the other. The chase lasted until Miss Kingsley's cab turned into Wall Street, when Joe alighted, paid his fare, and hastened after the other vehicle on foot, as it was now proceeding slowly. He traced it below William street, where it drew up before an old-fashioned brownstone building, and its mysterious young occupant alighted and told the chauffeur to wait. She cast a hurried glance around, as if to see if any one were observing her, then darted into the building. Joe was lurking in a near-by hallway. He reached the entrance to the building into which she had gone, and followed her. There was no elevator in the hall; but he heard the patter of her footsteps as she climbed the stairs to the next floor. Without the slightest hesitation he noiselessly crept after her, reaching the head of the stairs just in time to see her figure disappearing through the door of an office.

When Joe reached the glass door, he read the sign on it:

"FRANK DESMOND, STOCKS AND BONDS."

An amazed expression settled upon his features, for he knew from past experiences with the owner of the name that he was a notorious crook, whose shady deals in the financial district had more than once brought him within an inch of the law; but his nefarious transactions had been so cleverly executed that he invariably escaped arrest.

"Good God!" he muttered aghast. "Did she steal that necklace from her own safe for a sinister purpose? If she is associating with Desmond, she can't be on the level. What is she doing here with all the money she got from Omar? And yet she has the face of an angel and seemed the soul of honesty and decency! By Jove, this mystery is giving me a headache! What in thunder does it all mean, anyhow?"

Completely at his wit's end, he bent over and peeped through the key-hole into the office where his quarry had vanished.

CHAPTER FOUR

WORKING THE MICROPHONE

MARTIN could see a small outer office, containing nothing but a typewriter-table, at which sat a young girl chewing gum, to whom Miss Kingsley was speaking. A glass door in the back wall was lettered "Private."

"Mr. Desmond is inside," he heard the stenographer saying. "Wait here until I find out if he will see you, madam."

A whirl of ideas flashed into the officer's mind when he saw that he could not find out anything about what transpired in the inner office by remaining where he was. Then he suddenly stiffened up, hurried down-stairs, and ran at the top of his speed around the block into Pine street. He was very familiar with the location of all the buildings in that neighborhood, and recalled to mind that the one directly behind Desmond's building backed up to it with an air-well between.

When he reached the number he was seeking, he dashed in the entrance, rushed up one flight, sped to the rear of the hall and raised the window. Thrusting out his head, he scanned the air-well, then located a couple of windows which, he figured, must have opened from Desmond's private office. They were opposite the windows of the office at the rear of the hall. The detective saw the name "Boss & Co." lettered on the door. He had no means of knowing the nature of the firm's business, but went in and found it to be an exporting concern. No one was in but the old bookkeeper, and he asked the detective what he wanted. Martin threw back the lapel of his jacket, exposing his shield, and said:

"I am a detective shadowing the firm who occupy the office opposite yours across the airshaft. They are notorious crooks. Something is going on in there at this moment. Will you allow me to open one of your windows so I can spy on them? It may be of the greatest interest to me."

The old bookkeeper smiled and nodded.

"You have my consent, sir," he answered, "and you are not the first detective who has been here making that request. One of the Wall Street Secret Service men was in here last week for the same purpose. Said Frank Desmond, the stockbroker, was a well-known crook who had recently reappeared in the financial district, and claimed that he wanted to get a line on what Desmond was doing."

"I am greatly obliged," said Joe, raising one of the windows. Then he drew a microphone from his pocket, climbed up on the casement, and measured the three feet of space separating the two buildings. The shades at Desmond's windows were drawn down, and a ray of sunlight was beginning to slant into the shaft.

Martin straddled the shaft by stretching one leg across until his right foot rested on the sill of Desmond's window. There was a sharp-pointed hook on the transmitter of the microphone, which he pushed into the woodwork of the window-sash, where the upper and lower parts joined. Then he stepped back into the office and adjusted the receiver to his ear, a connection being established by an insulated wire joining the two parts of the listening instrument. It was capable of picking up the faintest sound and magnifying it wonderfully in the receiver, under the stimulus of a small dry-cell battery, which Joe carried in his pocket.

When he began listening in, a voice came through the crack in the window-joint which he recognized as that of Miss Kingsley. The tones were faint and somewhat indistinct, as the sound waves were imperfectly registered through such a poor medium; yet he could distinguish what she was saying, as he was possessed of acute hearing powers.

"I hope the money I brought will bring success to your big venture, Frank," she was saying; "but I cannot imagine a deal that will bring you over a million dollars from a fifty-thousand-dollar investment."

A laugh in a man's voice responded, and then his words followed:

"Of course you can't." Ladies cannot grasp the intricacies of business deals. Let it suffice that I am going to make a coup that will startle the world. I shall return the loan with compound interest within a week."

At that moment a buzzer sounded, then the voice of the stenographer:

"The five gentlemen who were here yesterday, Mr. Desmond, to buy that Union Pacific stock. They are impatient to see you, sir."

"All right, Miss Jones. I'll see them directly. Now, Bertha, will you kindly excuse me? It is very important that I see these customers."

"Why, of course. I shall not remain to interfere with your business, Frank. Are you going up to Sherry's to-night? There is a change of bill and a fine cabaret on, I am told. Jennie is anxious to go."

"I'll call at her apartment to-night at nine, and take you both there; but don't say anything about it to Mr. Gordon. You know what I told you about he and I being business enemies on account of our being on opposite sides of the market."

"I do not fancy these clandestine meetings, as they do not seem honorable," answered the girl in troubled tones. "But I suppose I shall have to endure it until you and uncle settle your business differences. I am going; good-by. I will be expecting you at Jennie's at nine."

There was an interval of silence, the sound of a door banging, then a number of men's voices in a confused jargon. They ceased entirely after a few moments. The detective listened with all his might, but failed to hear a sound, from which he inferred that they were speaking in such low tones that even the microphone was incapable of catching their voices. Several minutes passed by, Martin growing impatient despite all his efforts to master the feeling. Then Desmond's voice came over the wire:

"Here's the list. Now, listen. Shang Draper, you are booked for Boston, Red Kelly for Philadelphia, Hen Watson for Chicago, Billy Grimes for St. Louis, and Jack Landy goes to Denver. Each of you knows the name of the particular bank you are to work, and I'll have the other agents scattered in San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Butte, Pittsburgh, Seattle and all the rest of the cities."

There was a startled expression on Martin's face, for in the names he recognized a band of the worst crooks in the United States.

It was very evident that Desmond, the master crook, was engineering a gigantic plot in every big city in the Union, aimed at the banks located there. It was also apparent that he had borrowed the money to put over his plot from the innocent and confiding Bertha Kingsley. The detective was puzzled to know what Desmond contemplated doing, but was well enough acquainted with the man's methods to realize that it was going to be something big, for he never was known to evolve a petty larceny deal. A confused jumble of whispering voices came from the microphone, but the officer could not distinguish a word of what they were saying. In his anxiety to get an inkling of what their plans were, he was indiscreet enough to go out the window again and step across the airshaft to get his ear nearer to the crack in the frame. Then all of a sudden he noticed that the down-slanting sunbeams cast a reflection of his body on the shade. He hastily started to step back, pulling off the microphone and dropping it into his pocket; but he acted too late. The men in the room must have seen his shadow reflected upon the shade. An excited voice was heard shouting in Desmond's office:

"See there!"

The next instant the shade flew up and Joe saw half a dozen men's faces pressed against the glass of the window, glaring out at him. He recognized every one of them out of the corner of his eye as he swiftly averted his face in order to conceal his features. In this he seemed successful, for Desmond shouted:

"Who is the guy? What is he doing there?"

By this time the officer had leaped into the exporter's office and the shade in Desmond's place was pulled down suddenly and violently.

The old bookkeeper was an interested spectator.

"They caught you, didn't they?" he asked smilingly.

"Yes, confound it! And they will escape before I can get around into Wall Street, unless I hurry. I wish to thank you sincerely for your kindness."

He rushed out of the office, heedless of the bookkeeper's answer, and ran around the block in the hope of heading off the crooks. But when he reached Desmond's door, he found it standing wide open and everybody gone, including the girl stenographer. Going inside, the officer made a hasty search and examination of the place. Everything he saw tended to prove that the crooks had simply hired the office as a blind for some ulterior business, and it needed no stretch of the imagination to infer that they would never come back, since their suspicions were aroused by seeing an eavesdropper listening outside their window.

Joe made his way down to the sidewalk, where he found a negro porter leaning against the railing contently smoking a pipe.

He handed the darky a quarter.

"Did you see six men and a girl hurry out of this doorway a few minutes ago, my friend?" he asked.

"Yaas, sah. Dat was Mr. Desmond, sah. Dey all got in a automobile an' went like mad towards Broadway, jist befo' yo' went in."

"Thank you; that is all."

The detective walked over to Broadway and boarded a car which carried him to his office.

Murray was writing a letter when Joe walked in, but he looked up, nodded, and laid down his pen with the remark:

"Anything to report on the Gordon case, Joe?"

The detective flung himself into the spare chair.

"I left Mr. Gordon, his butler, cook and chambermaid locked in the library at the banker's house," he answered.

"I know all about it," said the chief with a smile. "Gordon just called me up on the phone and raised the mischief about it. Said they all might have been prisoners yet if Miss Kingsley had not returned from a trip in the street and let them out."

"Which means that I am fired, I suppose?"

"He threatened to do it. You know what a fire-eater the old banker is. Before he rung off he changed his mind and demanded that I send you back there to apologize and finish your job. He isn't going to his office until you make your appearance. You've got him hopping mad, Joe."

"No wonder," laughed the detective. "I was so hot on the trail of his niece that I forgot all about the old fellow and his servants, whom I had cooped up so they could not interfere with my investigations. The trail led me out of the house in pursuit of Miss Kingsley, and she led me down to Wall Street and into a nest of the most notorious penmen in the country, headed by Frank Desmond."

The usually inscrutable features of the chief underwent a change from wonder to amazement.

"Who was the bunch?" he demanded interestedly.

"Draper, Kelly, Watson, Grimes and Landy."

"All expert penpushers in the counterfeiting fraternity."

"Desmond is going to pull off a gigantic swindle with the aid of that gang, and I firmly believe that they are making the goat of Miss Kingsley. So you can understand the case, I'll recite the facts."

He gave the chief a minutely detailed account of all that had happened, and Murray did not open his mouth to ask a question until he had finished his story. Then he asked:

"Do you understand this mystery?"

"Not yet. I came here to get your opinion, as I am puzzled—badly puzzled. Miss Kingsley's connection with the crooks bewildered me a great deal more than her possession of the missing necklace did."

"Do you believe she stole the necklace in order to pawn it, so as to furnish Desmond with the funds he wanted to borrow?"

"No; and yet I cannot explain her possession of the missing ornament."

"Well, Joe, theorizing at long range will not get you anywhere. You will have to shadow the girl, learn the identity of Jennie, trail them to Sperry's, and try to catch on to Desmond's plans against the banks all over the country. As his pals are penmen, they must be up to some sort of forgery stunts."

"Chief, I do not want Gordon to know anything about what his ward is doing, and I do not want the ward to know that I am shadowing her. It is imperative that I should get into Gordon's house alone. Can't you manage to get all hands out of my way while I examine the upper rooms."

"Easily. I'll go up there with you; but I will go in alone and get every one down in the basement. As I will leave the front door unlocked, I can give you a signal by appearing at one of the basement windows, and that will be your cue to sneak in the front door. How long do you want me to keep them out of your way?"

"No more than fifteen minutes."

"Very well. I will invent an excuse for you to Gordon to appease his wrath. What shall it be?"

"Tell him the trail of the necklace thief led me out of the house, and say that I called you up to say that I shall call on Mr. Gordon as soon as the exigencies of the case will permit me to do so."

They left the office together and went up-town. Murray was admitted into Gordon's house, while Joe concealed himself in a near-by areaway. The detective located himself across the street, whence he had an uninterrupted view of Gordon's basement window. In the course of quarter of an hour he saw Murray step up to one of the windows and peer out. As soon as he disappeared, Joe crossed the street, ascended the front stoop and, finding the door unfastened, he cautiously opened it and passed in. He could hear the murmur of voices in the basement, but paid no heed to them as he glided up the stairs to the floor above.

He had taken a few necessary articles out of his bag, which he had left at headquarters. The whole kit was not now necessary. In the upper hall he went down upon his knees, flashing an electric lamp on the carpet until he found the foot impressions he was in search of. A little talcum outlined them clearly, and he traced them to the door out of which he had seen Miss Kingsley stealing at the time she had left the house. When he entered this room he quickly ascertained that it was Mr. Gordon's bedchamber. It was fitted up very handsomely. Everything was in perfect order, as the chambermaid had made up the bed, put everything in its place and dusted the furniture. After a searching glance the detective dropped on his knees again, continuing his trail of the naked footprints. They led him straight to the ornamental mantelpiece and thence to the bed. Near the mantel he found some red wax candle-grease. He next made a hasty search of the room, gathering a few tiny clues to be examined later on, and then he ransacked the bureau-drawers, the closet and a couch. He even searched under the edges of the carpet, through the bedding and behind every ornament in the room. The clothing in the closet next came under his attention, and when he had finished he left the room undisturbed in appearance, crept stealthily out into the hall, and went down-stairs. Once out of the house, he strolled to the corner, where he remained until the chief came out. They boarded a car which was unoccupied.

"Well?" asked Murray expectantly.

"Nothing but clues, but no important discoveries yet," said Joe in some disgust. "However, I have verified a suspicion I had. If it is correct I will make short work of this case. The trouble is that I shall have to prove my theory, and that cannot be done just at present. My next move is to shadow Miss Kingsley to her little cabaret party, for I am anxious to pick up Desmond's trail and ascertain what his plot against the banks consists of. As it is getting late now, I shall leave you at the next corner, go home, and prepare myself for work to-night."

The chief nodded silently, and Joe swung himself off the car and made his way to the bachelors' apartments he occupied on East Thirtieth street.

CHAPTER FIVE

IN THE DETECTIVE'S DEN

A JAPANESE valet admitted the detective to his apartment—a neatly dressed little fellow, with a never-changing face, like a Sphinx. He bowed low to his master, with his arms crossed on his breast.

"Supper, he is ready, Master Joe," he said.

"Any mail, Ruso Kato?" queried the officer wearily.

"Two letter—one he mark Horgan & Co., bankers; the other flom Secret Service chief, Washington. Also fifty-one teleglams."

Ruso was busy helping Joe to get out of his coat while speaking, and led the officer into a room furnish in real Oriental style. Every piece of furniture was of massive ebony wood, beautifully carved and upholstered with the richest Chinese silks. A soft droplight in a magnificent bronze pedestal stood on the table, shedding a warm, red glow around the walls, upon which there hung a profusion of rare Japanese silk tapestries. Here and there were valuable oil-paintings. The Daghestan rug on the polished floor was worth a fortune. There were wonderful works of art and sculpture on backets and in glass cases, and the doors and windows were hung with Persian draperies. Embroidered ottomans and inlaid tabourets were scattered on the floor; in a niche there was a huge Turkish couch, with a canopy of hand-worked, tinsellated Rumania cloths and a pendant lamp of antique gold. In easy reach of it stood a marvelously carved bookcase filled with rare volumes on the art of criminology. A desk against the wall was littered with the scattered sheets of a manuscript Martin was writing on the finer points of criminal detection.

It was very evident that the detective was a man of wealth and refined taste, for the furnishing of this room alone was worth a fortune.

When he was in dressing-gown and slippers, seated at the table, Ruso glided in with a tray of daintily prepared food from an adjoining kitchenette, over which he presided with the skill of a French chef.

Joe Martin was worth a fortune. He merely followed the detective profession because he had an inborn taste for it, and enjoyed the excitement of man-hunting. He liked pitting his wits against those of the sharpest, shrewdest crooks in the world. There was something about the dangerous life that held him in intense fascination.

The valet handed him his mail and telegrams, which were duly read.

He silently ate his meal, the Jap remaining as quiet as a mummy in the shadowy background, his beady black eyes fastened alertly upon the man who had always been kind and considerate to him.

When Joe finished eating and pushed his chair back from the table, Ruso was at his elbow with a beautiful hammered brass smoking-stand, upon which laid a filled pipe and several matches. The detective picked up the meerschaum, lighted it, and went over to his desk, upon which the Jap had laid his satchel.

He turned on a powerful electric light, drew out the microscope and the last papers containing the clues he had picked up, and busied himself examining their contents under the glass. From time to time he made notations in his memorandum book, then he laid out the clues in numerical order.

First, he had the size, shape and markings of the bare footprints he had traced through Gordon's library, hall, stairs and bedroom. They matched exactly the footprints of the banker which he had taken on the blackened paper.

"This proves," he cogitated, "that Mr. Gordon left his bedroom last night in his bare feet, went down into the library, over to the safe, and then retraced his steps to his bedroom."

Secondly, he had made a close analysis of the red grease-spots he had found on the library rug, on the hall and stair carpets, and on the carpet in the banker's bedroom. They were candle-grease.

And they proved to him that Gordon had carried a lighted red wax candle during his nocturnal prowl.

Thirdly, he had found Gordon's fingerprints and some minute particles of red candle-grease on Miss Kingsley's jewel-case, which told him that the banker must have taken the jewel-case out of the safe at the time he came down-stairs, carrying the lighted red wax candle.

Theoretically, all this would tend to prove that the banker was the thief who had come down-stairs after every one had retired and had abstracted the missing necklace. Of course, such a presumption would appear ridiculous, and yet the proofs were all here. To controvert that theory, Miss Kingsley had the stolen gems and had pawned them. Here the element of mystery intervened.

There was no evidence that she had stolen the necklace. The mere fact that she had it did not prove that she was the thief. There was, of course, the possibility that the banker had stolen it and had given it to her; and yet this theory was shown to be incorrect, for the girl had taken it from the house secretively and enjoined the pawnbroker not to allow her uncle to know she had it.

A second hypothesis that presented itself to the detective's mind was that Miss Kingsley and her uncle had concocted a plot between them to steal and dispose of the necklace for a reason best known to themselves. To guard against such a fact becoming known, they might have called in one of Murray's detectives, claiming an unknown thief had purloined the gem, so that an air of probability might be thrown over the disappearance as being the work of a professional crook.

If such a scheme had been planned and carried out, why was it done?

Joe figured that both the girl and her guardian were so rich that they could not have been actuated by the want of money, and yet the girl had deliberately pawned the necklace to get a certain amount of cash. On the other hand, Mr. Gordon's business was so huge that $50,000 was a mere bagatelle in his Wall Street operations. He was a man who dealt in millions.

No matter from which angle Joe viewed the case, it mystified him.

He lay back in his chair, puffing at his pipe and reflecting hard to find a reason for the girl's puzzling actions. She was under his suspicions now on account of her evident friendliness with a band of international crooks—men whose cleverness had worried and baffled the police of two continents. Every crooked deal in which they had been engaged during their checkered careers was something extrordinarily big. They despised the minor jobs that other crooks did for small sums. As Joe had taken a violent fancy to the girl, her connection with these men made him very nervous. He could not fathom her association with them, unless under cover she was a crook herself. He fancied that she might, like himself, be engaged in a hazardous calling just for the excitement of it. Her beautiful face seemed to belie the supposition that she was born with criminal instincts, for any physiognomist could plainly see that Miss Kingsley was innocent and inexperienced in evil.

"I can't go much further in my hunt for evidence in the Gordon home," he reflected. "I have got nearly every possible point located, and must now let the circumstances in the case develop themselves. Of course, it would not do to sit down inanely and trust to luck for a solution of this mystery. I'll have to keep a watch upon both Gordon and his niece, and in due time they will lead me to an explanation of the problem."

He turned to Ruso and looked at him intently.

"I want you to shadow Thomas Gordon, the banker, of No. — Wall Street," he said tersely. "He lives at No. — Madison avenue. Get on the job in the morning and bring me a report when I return home—understand?"

"Yes," said the Jap, bowing.

"In the meantime, I am going to watch his niece, Miss Kingsley."

"These honorable peoples, are they crooks?"

"I don't know. I think so; but the queer part is that they engaged me. Listen, Ruso, and I will tell you all about it. Then you can give me your opinion, as you frequently have done when I am rattled over a puzzling case. I value your acuteness very highly."

The little Oriental nodded his shiny black head of hair and with a respectful and somewhat deferential air stood at attention, while the detective concisely explained all that he had learned about the missing necklace. Ruso did not offer a single comment while his master was speaking, nor did he open his mouth when he had finished.

"Well," demanded the detective, after a brief interval of silence, "have you arrived at any sort of conclusion?"

"If honorable master permit, Ruso say old man steal necklace."

"I came to that conclusion myself, so you have verified my belief and that convinces me that I am right. But why did he steal it?"

"Mebbe need money in business," suggested Ruso. "Rich mans not always have ready cash for sudden requirement."

"That is a plausible reason. Let us grant that it is true, then tell me how you account for the girl having the gems, instead of the real thief, and why she pawned them."

The valet's blank features did not show any change.

"Maybe lady steal them. She act like thief when go out of house."

"I see that you are figuring that she took them to raise money for Desmond, who no doubt touched her for a big loan. Women are queer, Ruso. Some of them will go to any extreme for a man with whom they may be infatuated. It was clear to me that Miss Kingsley was greatly attracted to the crook. Besides, I gathered from what they said that he was about to so invest the money that she was going to make a high rate of interest on it. She may be mercenary—one of those people who are eager to increase their bank accounts—which would account for her lending him the money. I have known very respectable people who have done worse things than that to make money. But despite all our theorizing, we must admit that there is a veiled mystery covering the whole thing. If I can manage to penetrate it, the matter will be cleared up. I am going out again to-night to pick up the trail of Frank Desmond."

"I go too?"

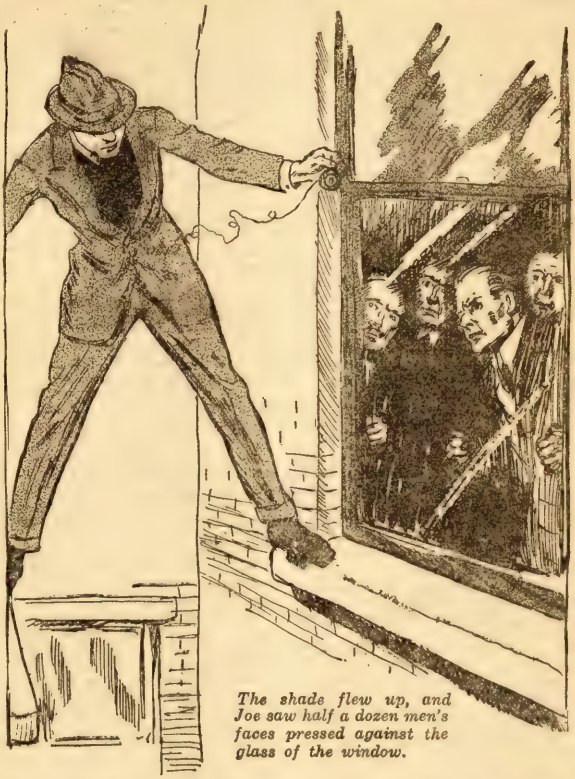
The Jap drew a small, glittering revolver from his hip-pocket and carefully examined the chambers to see if they were properly loaded. Joe eyed him speculatively. He knew what was in the Oriental's mind, and nodded.

"There may be some danger," he admitted thoughtfully. "I am stacking up against one of the most desperate gangs in the country, and although I am only on the trail of one, the rest may be in easy call of Desmond. If there should happen to be a scrap and I were alone, opposed by six to one, the odds would be decidedly against my winning. Yes, you may trail me, Ruso, and if you notice that I am getting the worst of a scrimmage, I would be very thankful if you chanced to be within helping range."

Ruso pocketed his weapon and showed his white, shiny teeth in what he intended to be a pleased smile.

"Will honorable master disguise?" he asked softly.

"Well, Desmond and his pals know my face pretty well," said Joe thoughtfully. "The lady in the case also has seen my map. As I hope to mingle in their society to some extent and do not wish to be recognized, it might be just as well if I change my appearance a trifle, although I do do not approve of the use of disguises, unless it is absolutely necessary. You might shade up my features with a few age lines, clap a small brown mustache on my upper lips and put a slight gray tinge in my hair. It's remarkable what a difference a few slight alterations will make in one's appearance. Be mighty careful not to overdo it, Ruso, for there is nothing like naturalness when resorting to an artificial make-up. Get busy."



The shade flew up, and Joe saw half a dozen men's faces pressed against the glass of the window.

He lay back in his chair, and the valet brought out a box of grease-paint, an assortment of false mustaches and some brushes and pads. The latter were small pieces of rubber molded to fit inside the mouth, between the cheeks and gums. They not only changed the contour of the features, but slightly altered the voice of inflexions. A pair were stowed in Joe's mouth, and the Jap parted his hair in the middle, plastering it down smoothly with a little gum in the water. That altered the shape of the detective's forehead. Then his eyebrows were flattened out with the same sticky substance, changing them from a narrow, finely penciled shape to a fatter and wider one, altering the appearance of his eyes considerably.

The mustache he selected was absolutely natural in appearance and quality of hair, and the adhesive gum on its back was of such a tenacious kind that there was not the slightest chance for it to become disarranged or removed from his lip by any ordinary means. Then the Jap added a few deft touches with several delicate pencils to the lines in the officer's face which seemed to deepen them materially, adding age, care or dissipation to his otherwise smooth skin. Then a liquid applied here and there to Martin's hair over the temples lent it a grayish tinge, and a small, dark blue imitation of a tattoo-mark on his left hand completed the metamorphosis. He donned a dress-suit, was handed a silk hat, a pair of tan gloves, a silver-handled cane and a pair of patent leather shoes.

When he was fully arrayed, he keenly surveyed his reflection in the big wall mirror and looked satisfied.

Ruso was watching him, and when he saw the officer's expression he turned away and put the discarded clothing in a closet. Then he helped his master into a light overcoat and handed him the cane, gloves and hat.

"Automatic?" he asked briefly.

"Might as well," assented Joe.

Ruso took the pistol from a drawer in the table, handed it over, put on his own hat and coat, and waited at the door.

Joe glanced at his watch. It was just nine o'clock.

"Ring up a taxi," he remarked.

The Jap complied, and within five minutes a hack was at the door. They entered it after Joe said "Sperry's," and were driven away.

The officer recalled to mind that Desmond had told Miss Kingsley that he would call at the mysterious Jennie's apartment, to which the banker's niece was to go, and that he would meet them there at nine and escort them to the cabaret.

"You are to remain outside," Joe said to the Jap as they sped along the brilliantly lighted great White Way. "I may follow the girl. If I do, you trail Desmond. Should you lose him, track the woman Jennie and find out where she lives. I cannot give you explicit instructions now. Everything will depend upon which one I attach myself to."

"Ruso understan' everysling."

The taxi pulled up before one of the most noted lobster palaces on Broadway, and the detective alighted, paid the toll, and swung through the doors which a boy in livery opened, while the Jap waited until the cab was about to start, and then slipped out the opposite door. He was very adroit, for he seemed to melt away like a phantom. At any rate, he was nowhere in sight when the taxi shot down the street.

The detective left his coat, hat, cane and gloves in the cloakroom, and, passing through the draped grill, suddenly found himself in a blinding blaze of light coming from hundreds of electric lamps on ceiling, pillars and arches. A sea of snowy linen, covering scores of tables, was spread before his view, the strains of a Strauss waltz floated from a stringed orchestra hidden in a bower of flowers and ferns, and there was a gorgeous assemblage of beautifully gowned ladies and men in evening costume at the tables. Dozens of waiters were gliding among them, and in a cleared space a Nautch girl was dancing a sinuous Hawaiian poem in motion. The air was scented from fountains of perfume, but reeked with tobacco smoke blown from the lips of both sexes. Some of the people were dining, but most were drinking; and every woman in the place was flashing with countless jewels.

The detective cast a sweeping glance around the place, and a slight smile curved the corners of his lips as his eyes rested upon Miss Kingsley, Frank Desmond and a flashily attired woman. They were sitting together at a table near the east wall, drinking a bottle of Mumm's extra dry, which a black-clad waiter had just served.

The detective strolled carelessly toward them.

CHAPTER SIX

AT THE CABARET

THE head waiter raised a finger to the detective and rapidly led him to a vacant table, quite close to that occupied by the people he was shadowing. He ordered a Bronx cocktail, took a cigarette from a silver case, and an obsequious "omnibus" held a lighted match to the end. Through the veil of smoke puffed up he covertly watched the dark-complexioned woman with Desmond trying to place her identity in his mind. She was dazzlingly beautiful, with large, sparkling black eyes, fringed with long, drooping lashes. The massive coils of black hair on her head were modishly dressed, and her gown was a pink chiffon, trimmed with silver, iridescent cut-glass embroidery. She was smoking a cigarette.

"No. 14,000 in the Rogues Gallery!" suddenly muttered Martin. "Now I remember her. It's Jennie Lee, the confidence woman. Nice company for Miss Kingsley to be keeping. Both, perhaps, working the heiress for money. Luckily she doesn't know me."

The three were watching the dancer until she bowed herself off the floor, and then began animatedly discussing her art. Nothing was said or done in the detective's presence of any particular interest to him during the hour that followed. People were coming and going continually, while at intervals the performers absented themselves and couples from the audience danced. He saw Desmond speak to Miss Kingsley, who nodded and smiled, then both arose and glided away among the dancers, leaving Jennie Lee seated alone at her table. She slightly turned to watch Desmond and his fair partner, when her dainty lace handkerchief slipped off her lap, where she had deposited it, and fell to the floor.

The detective instantly sprang to his feet, picked up the filmy bit of cambric, and Jennie glanced around at him just as he courteously proffered it to her, with the remark:

"Permit me, madam. You just dropped it."

Her eyes studied his face for an instant, swept his rich garments from tip to toe, and a most charming smile crept over her dark features as she extended a slim, gloved hand for the handkerchief.

"Thank you," she said softly. "So kind of you, sir. I valued it highly, as it was a present from a friend in Paris. The war makes it very difficult to get anything more from there just now."

An idea of getting into her apartment was in his mind, and he set to work to get an invitation to join her party.

"Delighted to be of service," he said smilingly. "I am an importer, and have a number of exquisite ones which I would be pleased to send you."

The woman figured that he was wealthy—an excellent victim. It might pay to cultivate him, and she rather liked his appearance. Jennie had noticed him casually while he was sitting alone at his table, and inferred that he was seeking an acquaintance from sheer lonesomeness.

"How dear of you!" she exclaimed delightedly. "Won't you sit down at this table? I saw you alone over there. I have a couple of friends with me. They are dancing. This is a Bohemian place, but for appearances I can introduce you as an old acquaintance, which will make matters all right."

"I would be delighted. Allow me to give you my card."

He took a fake pasteboard from his cardcase, bearing the name Robert Van Der Grift. She glanced at it, and said graciously:

"I am Mrs. Jennie Lee, a widow. The gentleman with me is my brother, Frank Desmond, and the lady is his fiancée, Miss Bertha Kingsley. When they return, I shall introduce you to them. Pray be seated."

Joe thanked her and took a chair at her side. He had seen her appraising glance, knew that she was planning to victimize him, and began to make himself as agreeable to her as he knew how. While they were engaged in an animated conversation, Desmond and his dancing partner came back, looking somewhat surprised to see Joe at their table talking to the woman; but when she introduced him under his fictitious name she found a chance to wink significantly at Desmond behind Joe's back, giving him to understand that she was playing a game of her own. The detective had begun speaking to Miss Kingsley, glad of the opportunity to get acquainted with her, even though it were in a peculiar manner.

"I would like to buy some more champagne," he remarked. "I see that your bottle is empty. It is a wonderful stimulant, Miss Kingsley."

"I seldom drink wines, and never smoke," she answered smilingly. "To-night is an exception, as Mr. Desmond would have been angry had I refused a toast to the success of a business venture he is working partly for my benefit—a venture that promises to become a huge success. You see, he is a Wall Street stockbroker, and you know how fast one can make a fortune on the market."

"I sincerely trust that your venture will become highly

profitable," said the detective. "When do you expect results?"

"Why, he said he was going to begin operations on Monday."

"Bertha," interrupted Desmond reprovingly, "have you forgotten that I enjoined the greatest secrecy about your speculation?"

"Oh, but I have not mentioned the name of the stock," she pouted. "Besides, I have not gone into any details that might injure our chances."

"Don't worry about me," laughed Joe, glancing straight into Desmond's frowning eyes; "I am no speculator. You couldn't drag me into the Wall Street market with a team of horses. I'm just a plain, old-fashioned business man, with a natural aversion of speculating. I wouldn't play the market even if you were to mention the name of a stock that was sure to rise."

"My dear fellow, it is not you I fear," answered the crook glibly; "but one must be very secretive in such matters, as a leak of our plans might cause us the loss of thousands. You know how fast tips travel once they get away from a sure-thing speculator?"

"Of course," assented Joe. "Let us change the subject, for here comes a singer. I've heard she is the star attraction to-night."

It was a soprano with a phenomenal voice. Desmond seemed pleased to end the discussion, and Joe saw him give Miss Kingsley a frown of displeasure and shake his head at her admonishingly.

The singer ended the first verse of her ballad amid a wild burst of applause, during which the detective leaned toward Jennie Lee.

"I love music. She is a wonderful singer," he remarked. "I have always been anxious to get hold of a comer, develop her at my own expense, and launch her with a first-class operatic company."

"You have?" she cried, beaming on him as if enraptured. 'Why, then I can give you a chance, for I am one of those aspirants to Thespian fame; but I never could get a backer who would see me through to the footlights and fortune. I would dearly love to have you hear me sing. Couldn't you accompany us home from here? Then you might judge of the quality of my voice. I may be the very one you are seeking."

"You astonish me," said Joe, looking duly surprised.

"Say that you will come," she pleaded, laying her hand on his, and assuming a wistful expression. "You can see that I would have a good stage presence, for people tell me I am handsome, I have a good figure, my voice is remarkably flexible, of great range and power, and I have had some training in acting."

"You would make a marvelous performer as far as appearances go," he remarked seriously. "If you can convince me of your ability to sing and act, I would not hesitate to embark in any enterprise to star you, no matter what the cost. Money is no object when it comes to a chance to double it with one successful season. I'll be only too glad to go home with you. Who knows what it may lead to?"

"An angel!" she reflected exultantly. "Oh, how easily some men fall for a woman's smile and a woman's lies."

At that moment a party of gentlemen in evening dress came in laughing and talking, and the head waiter conducted them to a large table not far from where Joe was seated. He glanced at them, and saw one of the men remain standing, carelessly sweeping a glance around the room at the people at the tables. The detective gave a slight start when he saw that the man wore a wig of dark hair. His own red hair showed slightly at the nape of his neck when he stooped over. That he was in disguise was very evident, and a searching gaze at his face showed the officer that he had familiar features. Then his identity came to the detective.

"Shang Draper!" he reflected.

The sharp scrutiny he bent upon the man's companions quickly revealed the fact that they were the same crowd he had seen in Desmond's Wall Street office. It was clear that they were there for a sinister purpose.

Joe now watched Desmond, and saw him staring at the group of men. He finally caught the glance of Draper, and made a slight motion. It was a signal, for the man nodded, arose from the table and sauntered over to the lobby, where he slipped out of sight behind the draperies. Desmond instantly got upon his feet.

"Please pardon me," he said to the ladies. "I shall return in a few minutes. Jennie, entertain Miss Kingsley while I am away. Mr. Van Der Grift, will you come along?"

"Certainly," answered Joe, without evincing the surprise he felt.

He walked away with the crook, who said in a low tone:

"I'm going to speak to a fellow who owes me some money. I just saw him go out in the lobby, and would like to have a witness."

"I'll do anything I can to be of service," answered Joe wonderingly.

They parted the curtains, and were just in time to see Draper opening a door that led into a small ante-room.

"There he goes now," said the crook, hurrying forward.

The detective pressed on close behind him, and Desmond opened the door and hurried into the room.

It was the office of the cabaret manager, and merely contained a desk and a few chairs. Two windows at one side opened on the yard. The manager was out.

As Joe glided into the room after Desmond, he failed to see Draper. But he had hardly passed the threshold when the door slammed shut, there sounded a key turning in the lock, and Draper was behind them. He had been hiding behind the door, and shut and locked it after Desmond and Joe got in. The detective was startled at this singular procedure. He turned an inquiring glance upon Desmond and found that individual smiling at him in a sneering manner. There was a momentary silence between the three men, which was finally broken by the officer.

"Well?" he asked.

"Joe Martin," said Desmond dryly, "did you think for a moment that I didn't know you? I'm aware that you recognized Shang and I. Now, tell us what you are shadowing us for?"

The detective was raging. Until now he did not suspect that they had penetrated his disguise. But he did not let his feelings show. On the contrary, he assumed a bland smile, and said carelessly:

"What do you mean, Frank?"

"I mean that we know all about your visit to the rear window of my office down-town. I knew who you were the moment I saw you listening in at the light well, although you averted your face to hide your identity."

Martin reflected. He knew perfectly well that it was no easy matter to deceive this crook, whose life was spent in a condition of perpetual alertness for attack from the police.

"I have a good reason," Joe answered coolly. "When you gather a bunch of notorious crooks about you, and I happen to get on to it, the presumption is that you are hatching some deviltry, Desmond."

"What do you know?" demanded Desmond.

"Nothing definite yet."

"Nor will you, if I know myself, as there is no game on."

"Stop your lying, Frank! Do you think I am blind? What are you stringing Miss Kingsley for, unless your purpose is crooked?"

"That girl is in love with me. I am going to marry her."

"You are lying again. You can't marry her. Jennie Lee is your lawful wife. Jennie is working in with you on this deal. Miss Kingsley is rich; consequently your plan must be to swindle her out of money."

"And as you are in love with her, you mean to block me, I suppose?" sneered Desmond. "Is that what you mean?"

"I don't intend to let her come to grief through you."

"What are you going to do about it—warn her of her danger?"

"I'm not telling you, Desmond."

"Are you looking for money? I don't want to get into any trouble with the police of this burg. As every man has his price, I will hand you a tidy sum if you will agree to leave me alone."

Joe pretended to reflect over his proposition. In reality he was figuring that he could lead Desmond to think that his sole purpose was to protect Miss Kingsley, whereas he knew that there was a deeper plot afoot. Miss Kingsley was merely an incident to the principal game the crooks were playing. He had not fathomed their real purpose yet, but it was imperative to do so. He hoped to make them think that he did not suspect their actual design, so he said:

"No amount of money will cause me to leave Miss Kingsley at your mercy, Desmond, so you may as well abandon all expectations in that direction."

Desmond and Draper exchanged significant glances.

"Well," said the former reluctantly, "I can't afford to get into trouble just now. You win. I haven't done the girl any harm yet. You can take her home. I only want one promise of you."

"Name it."

"Don't let her know anything about my character."

"It isn't necessary to tell her anything," said Joe quietly. "You can make some plausible excuse to break off with her."

"And you will let up on me for going as far as I did?"

"Oh, I can't see that you have done any material harm yet."

Desmond unlocked the hall door.

"You can go," he announced laconically.

The detective turned toward the door as if to walk out, but the shadow of Desmond behind him, swiftly raising a chair in the air to bang him on the head, caused Joe to whirl around. He crouched back, and as quick as a flash drew his automatic. Holding it at his hip, he covered the man. There was a dangerous gleam in his eyes as he said:

"Drop that chair, you treacherous hound!"

With a baffled expression upon his face, the crook slowly lowered the chair, but his eyes were fixed upon Shang, behind Martin. The other crook was silently getting in position to attack the detective. The next instant he made a flying leap, and landed upon Joe's back; his sinuous fingers gripped the officer's throat in a strangle hold, and he bore the detective over backward, panting meanwhile:

"Lend a hand, Frank!"

The detective realized that his life was in danger. These two scoundrels evidently did not trust him, and probably designed to kill him, to remove a dangerous obstacle from their path. The very idea of it nerved Joe to superhuman strength. He got a grip on Draper's thumbs, and bent them back until they actually cracked at the joints, wringing a smothered yell of pain from his lips and causing him to relax his hold. And as his fingers left Joe's throat, the detective suddenly ducked downward, gave an upward heave, and sent the crook somersaulting over his back. Shang hit the floor with a forceful thump, but the next instant Desmond struck the detective a sledge-hammer blow on the face, sending him reeling against the wall half dazed.

Joe pulled his wits together as best he could, and lunged at the man who struck him with all his force. Desmond caught his wrist, turning the blow aside, and they gripped each other in a fierce struggle.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE HEIRESS

DRAPER had risen to his feet and made an effort to assist Desmond, but had little opportunity, as his companion was fighting hard. But the detective was getting the best of the scuffle, as he was stronger than his antagonist, and much more rapid in his movements. At a favorable moment he dealt Desmond a tremendous blow on the jaw, almost dislocating it. The stunning effect and pain were so great that the crook fell back helplessly. Like a tiger the officer turned his attention to Draper, and with another well directed uppercut he sent the fellow crashing over the desk, cutting open his eyebrow.

Thoroughly aroused now, Joe made a rush for Desmond again, but before he could inflict any further punishment the door flew open and the proprietor and several waiters rushed in, alarmed by the noise of the fracas. They pounced on Martin, preventing him from attacking his enemies, and the owner became excited and roared at one of the waiters:

"Run for the police!"

"Let me go!" panted Joe, struggling to get free. "Those fellows are a pair of crooks. I am arresting them."

"He lies!" hissed Desmond savagely. "He lured us in here to rob us. I'll see that he is punished. Come on, Shang, and we'll get a cop to pull him in. This is an outrage, sir, a dreadful outrage!"

He rushed out of the room despite the protests of the detective, and, reaching the street door, Desmond blew a whistle as a signal to his pals inside the cabaret; then they leaped into a waiting limousine. In less than a minute afterward the rest of the gang, accompanied by Jennie Lee, came running out, joined the pair, and they were whirled away.

Startled by the queer actions of the woman, Miss Kingsley was left alone, standing at her table staring at the retreating figure of her companion as she disappeared through the curtains.

Led by the waiter who summoned him, a policeman ran into the ante-room, gripping a club in his hand, prepared to attack a desperate crook, but when he saw that the prisoner was Martin, his face relaxed. A broad grin appeared on his good-humored face, and he flung the waiters aside, put his hand on Joe's arm and asked solicitously:

"What's ther matther, Mr. Martin?"

"These fools interfered while I was tackling a pair of crooks," answered the detective, rubbing his disarranged clothing.

"Ther blamed idiots!" gasped the policeman, scowling at the waiters. "Fer ther love av heaven, don't youse guys know a detective whin yer see wan? Where's yer min, Mr. Martin?"

"Escaped, thanks to their stupidity!"

"Bad luck ter thim!"

The owner and his men looked abashed.

"We've made a mistake," mumbled the former apologetically.

"I guess you have," retorted Joe dryly.

He walked outside, and, glancing around, saw nothing, as he expected, of his quarry. The doorman stood on the sidewalk, and Joe asked him:

"Did you notice a couple of men hurrying out a few moments ago?"

"Yes, sir. They got in a limousine. A woman and four other men hurried out, got in the same car, and they went off, breaking the speed limit."

Joe nodded comprehensively. He did not see anything of his Jap, Ruso, so he returned to the dining-room, very much disgusted with the outcome of the whole affair. But he had now learned that the Desmond gang were aware that he was on their trail, and it took no stretch of the imagination to infer that they were desperate with fear of an exposure of the game they were trying to pull off, which meant that it was something big. He returned to Miss Kingsley. She was still standing watching the curtains, as if expecting Jennie Lee to reappear. Joe smiled, and, joining her at the table, he seated himself as she sank into her chair.

She stared at the detective with manifest surprise, for his hair was mussed up, his necktie was awry, and there was dirt all over his clothes.

"Why, what have you been doing, Mr. Van Der Grift?" she asked curiously. "You look as if you had been engaged in a fight."

"So I have," he smiled. "Trying to arrest a bunch of the most notorious crooks in New York, the leader of whom is Frank Desmond."

"What!" she gasped, turning pale. "Mr. Desmond? Impossible!"

"And his wife, Jennie Lee," proceeded Joe, narrowly watching the effect of his words upon her.

For one second it seemed as if she were going to faint, but she mastered the shock with remarkable courage, and asked in a hoarse whisper:

"His wife, did you say?"

"His lawful wife."

"Then he has grossly deceived me!"

"Merely been playing you for money."

She frowned and thought for a moment, then she faced him suddenly, and bending a meaning glance upon his features, she said:

"If you were going to arrest him, then you must be a detective!"

"That is my vocation. My real name is Joe Martin. I am an operative in the Murray detective agency. Do you remember ever having seen me before? Take a careful look at my features."

He removed the mouth pads and false mustache.

"There is something familiar about you. I noticed it the moment I first saw you at this table, but for the life of me I cannot recall where I met you before."

"It was in the office of the old pawnbroker, Omar, on Thirty-fourth street."

"Ah, yes, now I remember," she answered, a great light beaming in her eyes. Then her face flushed, and she added hesitatingly, "Were you watching me?"

"The time has come when some true explanations are due to you, Miss Kingsley," said Joe gravely. "Do not get nervous. I shall escort you home safely since your late companions are in flight. We may as well speak here as anywhere else, for no one is near enough to hear our conversation. You have innocently entangled yourself with a band of unprincipled crooks. Now tell me how it happened, and then I shall explain my part in this peculiar affair. Do not be afraid to speak frankly, as I shall honor your confidence."

She gazed steadily at him for the space of a few moments as if weighing in her mind what he said. There was something so genteel about the man that she was very favorably impressed.

"I think I can trust you," she remarked finally. "Anyway, this matter is assuming such ugly proportions that I had better see if I cannot rectify it in some manner before it gets worse. I met Jennie Lee while shopping, and she seemed so eminently respectable that quite a friendship sprang up between us. I invited her to call on me, and then I called on her. At her apartment she introduced me to Mr. Desmond, who, she said, was her brother. He represented himself as being single, and paid me the closest attention. I began to like him very much. He said he was a Wall Street broker, and told me confidentially that he was going to swing a big deal that would pay a handsome dividend, but lacked $50,000 of the amount he needed to put it through the stock market. I offered to raise the money, under condition that he would return the original sum advanced, plus the profit, which was to be one hundred per cent."

"I know all about that part of the transaction," said Joe quietly.

"You do?" she asked in some surprise. "Well, to finish my story: He told me that he and my uncle were enemies in the brokerage business, and begged me not to let Mr. Gordon know anything about the matter. I consented to this arrangement, but insisted that when the stock deal was finished that I must be absolved from secrecy and tell my guardian. He had no objection to this arrangement, so I made an effort to get the sum he required, but failed. Then, owing to a rather singular circumstance, I was enabled to secure a very valuable diamond necklace, which I owned, and, as Desmond kept pressing me for the money, I pawned the necklace."

"Yes, I know all about that incident too," interrupted Joe.

"Then you must have shadowed me to the pawnbroker's; you must have been the concealed man whose eyes I saw looking at me through the holes in the oil painting on the wall?"

"Your surmise is correct, Miss Kingsley."

"Why were you shadowing me?"

"Finish your explanation and I will tell you."

The girl began to look puzzled and anxious, but it seemed to be a relief to her to confide her story to the detective, for she went on:

"I tried to find out from Mr. Desmond what the transaction in Wall Street was, but he refused to inform me, as he hinted that the secret might leak out and spoil all his plan to make a tremendous coup. I trusted him implicitly, and had to be contented with his evasions. Jennie Lee helped the deception along by assuring me that he was the soul of honor and integrity. I believed her, as both he and she possessed the faculty of impressing people with the idea that they were truthful and honest. The woman made the engagement for this little dinner, so I met her and Desmond at her apartment, and we came here together. But, had I known that I was associating with a band of crooks, I of course would never have had anything to do with them. This adventure has taught me the lesson to be scrupulously careful of making promiscuous acquaintances."

"Then you are quite disillusioned about Desmond?" inquired the officer earnestly. "You are satisfied that those people are criminals?"

"Everything seems to indicate the truth of your assertion. While you and Desmond were outside I sat here talking to Jennie Lee. A whistle was blown, she sprang to her feet, a troubled expression upon her face, and, without a word to me, she suddenly gathered up her skirts and rushed out of here as if she were greatly frightened. You can imagine my amazement as I watched her and wondered what had happened. It was very mortifying, for it attracted the attention of every one in the place to me for a few moments."

"It certainly must have been very embarrassing," he assented.

"Do you suppose that Desmond has swindled me out of that money?"

"I know it to be a fact. But, as it happens that I am after him, there is a possibility that I may be enabled to recover the amount for you. The fact is that you have been very cleverly duped by a gang of pretty slick sharpers, Miss Kingsley."

"Has my uncle got to know about it? I do not want him to, if there is any way to avoid it."

"Your secret is absolutely safe with me at present, for I happen to be in Mr. Gordon's employ. It was while investigating a job for him that I happened to run across your trail in this rather mysterious case."

"Will you explain how?"

"Most assuredly. Your uncle came to our office and engaged me to recover a diamond necklace which was stolen from your jewel case. He enjoined me to keep the matter a secret from you. The necklace was yours."

"Good gracious! Did he do that?"

"Yes; but as matters have turned out, it so happens that I cannot refrain from telling you everything, as I need your assistance in unraveling this mystery. He permitted me to search the house for possible clues to the thief, and it was while I was up-stairs that I saw you surreptitiously leaving a bedroom, and shadowed you to the pawnbroker's. From there I followed you to Desmond's office in Wall Street. It was there I learned that you were involved with a band of desperate crooks. I realized that you were an innocent victim, of course, and as I heard you agree to come here with him to-night I appeared on the scene, slightly disguised, with the result which you have seen."

"Do you mean to say that my uncle engaged you to recover my lost necklace?" asked the girl incredulously.

"That is exactly how I happened to be on this case. And, now that I have located the missing necklace, will you kindly tell me how it happened to be in your possession?"

"That is a question that I do not care to answer at present."

"It would clear up the mystery I have been working on."

"No doubt it would, but I am not going to tell you what you wish to know until the right time comes, Mr. Martin. As the necklace belongs to me, I believe I am justified in doing as I please about it."

"That's a fact," said Joe in some perplexity; "but it prevents me from finishing up my case with your guardian."

Miss Kingsley laughed quietly.

"I am sorry to keep you in a state of suspense," she said with provoking mischievousness, "but until I have satisfied myself upon a certain point, I intend to retain my secret inviolable. I guess you can stand deferring the finish of your case if I can."

"It's pretty exasperating to me."

"Of course it is; but I am actuated by a very potent reason. In fact, the matter of that necklace had got me puzzled a great deal, too. But for the present it is quite safe, so why worry about it?"

"Then I shall have to dismiss myself from the case."

"If you do, I may lose my $50,000," she hinted.

"That money," he said thoughtfully, "is to be employed in the execution of some gigantic scheme to defraud the banks all over the country, and is not to be used in a stock deal, as Desmond lyingly told you. I have telegraphed all the banks to look out for Desmond's gang, as they are hatching some deviltry against them which I am trying to fathom, and fifty-one of the banks sent me answering telegrams to-night thanking me for the information and urging me to try to ascertain what the game is to be. In order to secure you, and save the banks a loss, I must keep on with my attack against these crooks. Are you quite sure you do not know anything about their plans? Didn't Desmond or his wife ever drop a hint in your presence that might serve as a clue to their designs?"

Miss Kingsley reflected seriously a few moments and shook her head.

"The only thing said in my presence that struck me as being odd," she answered, "were a few words that passed between Jennie and Desmond just before we left their apartment to-night. He asked her if she had gone to Cooper's department store to make her purchase. She said she had. Then he asked if she had gotten her change in the form of a check. Jennie nodded, and handed him a check of Cooper & Co. for five dollars, saying: 'I gave them a ten-dollar bill. My purchase amounted to five dollars. Then I insisted upon getting the change in the form of a check. I explained that I wished to mail it. I had to go through a whole lot of red tape to get my change that way, but finally accomplished it, and here it is.' She handed Desmond the check, and I saw him smile broadly and put it in his pocketbook. Then he said 'Good for you, Jennie. We've got Cooper & Co.'s genuine signature now, and it will be easy to get a blank check of the same kind. I only hope the rest of the boys have been as successful. I'll find out when we reach the cabaret, as they are going to be there. It looks to me as if we were going to win out on this deal.' Then we left for the cabaret."

Joe looked startled. What she told him was of the greatest value. It clearly indicated to his practised mind that the crooks were going to put over a deal that involved checks. They were all notorious forgers, but Joe did not believe that they were intent upon forgery now. He felt satisfied that their plan was something bigger, as he already knew that they were after a million, and it would be extremely difficult to get such a vast sum by mere forgery. The game was apparently to use signed checks made out by prominent business houses. But how?

He swiftly turned the matter over in his mind, trying to figure out just what the plot was, but failed dismally. Then he said to Bertha:

"Come, let us go home."

She nodded and arose. Joe paid the bill which the crooks failed to do in their hurried flight, and a few minutes later they stepped into a taxi and rode up-town.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CLUE OF GOLD

HAVING left Bertha Kingsley at her door, Joe was driven home, his brain in a whirl of pleasure, for the girl had evinced such a deep interest in him that she asked him to call on her.

Rusto Kato admitted the detective into the apartment, his yellow face bland and complacent, and his jet eyes gleaming with satisfaction.

"Master Joe had tlouble," he commented, as he helped the officer to take off his coat. "Plenty much dirty."

"I had a scrap with Desmond and Draper," answered the detective wearily. "I'm dead tired, Ruso. You disappeared. Where did you go?"

"Hung on limousine as far as Desmond house," said the Jap. "Woman went in an' bling out valise. She an' Desmond went to Hotel Astor under name Mr. an' Mrs. Lee."

"What became of the men?"

"All went off on tlains flom Pennsylvania depot, I hear Shang say—one go to St. Louis, one to San Flancisco, one to Baltimore, one to Denver, an' one to Chicago. Desmond hand each man paper, but I pick Draper's pocket an' got his. Here it is, Master Joe; all berry nice wliting on it."

Martin flashed an admiring glance at the astute Jap, and scanned the little piece of writing-paper he handed over.

Upon it was written in pencil a somewhat puzzling cipher:

"Jr-wr-Shuubv-Jhw-zdgzpryhur-fkhfn-Iluvw-
Qdwlrqdo-Edqn. Prpgdb."

"Orders, probably," said Martin.

"You can lead him?" queried Ruso curiously.

"Looks like a simple thing to decipher. I'll get at it in a few minutes. Bring me a box of cigars. I want to think."

He went into his study, after shedding his dress-suit and washing his face and hands, flung himself into an arm-chair and lighted a Havana.

"Is that all you know, Kato?" he asked abruptly.

"No more."

Joe fixed his mind upon the cipher, then began a mental method of elimination of letters. Next he tried an addition, and this failing, he began a transposition. First taking the word at the beginning of the cipher, he made J a K. It was a failure. Then he made a short-cut by writing down the alphabet, and under it another alphabet, beginning with B. This was also a failure, but he persisted, next using C, and as that was wrong, he tried D, with this result:

D being A, J would be G and R would be O, which spelled Go. The rest was easy, for the cipher spelled out the sentences:

"Go to Perry's. Get Wanamover's check. First National Bank. Monday."

A faint smile crept over Martin's face.

"This is a key to their plot. I've read the message, Ruso."

"Of course," said the Jap, as if he were satisfied from the start that his master would do it. "What him say?"

Martin read the line aloud.

"Wanamover," said he, "is the name of a big department store in Philadelphia. Consequently you must have been deceived by the talk of their destinations. Where did Desmond tell Draper to go?"

"Chicago," said Ruso.

"Well, according to their code, Chicago must have meant Philadelphia. These codes are used in conversation in public places by crooks to fool any chance listener. They put one over on you."

"If Honorable Master please, Ruso go to tlicket office an' see where buy tlickets for," smiled the Jap, rolling up his sleeve and exhibiting his white linen cuff, upon which he had written with pencil:

"Draper, Philadelphia; Kelly, Los Angeles; Watson, Boston; Grimes, Milwaukee, and Landy, Cleveland."

Joe burst out laughing, and slapped the shrewd little yellow man on the back approvingly. Ruso's keenness had baffled the crook's attempt to disguise their movements.

"You fooled them quite cleverly," he remarked. "I hope they did not get onto your movements? They are a sharp bunch, you know."

"I sure not."

"Very well. It's a chance. To-day is Friday. We must work quick. Bring me a bunch of night message telegraph blanks and I will send out a general alarm to the banks again, and incidentally notify the Secret Service. It has men in every city in the Union. I'll have to have their help, as we will need an officer in every big city to stall off Desmond's attempt to mulct the bankers."

The Jap handed the blanks, and he wrote the same message to each one, and sent Ruso to despatch them. When he was alone he rang up the Federal department in the post-office, and got the chief of the New York Division on the wire.

"This is Joe Martin," he began. "I need help in every big city in the country on Monday. One officer in each place will do to round up Desmond's band of forgers. They are going to spring a big clean-up on the banks all over the States. Can I count on your aid?"

"Of course you can, Joe. What's their game?"

"I haven't got as far as that yet. I have notified all the banks by wire to be on the lookout on Monday for strangers presenting big, suspicious-looking checks to their paying tellers. In every instance where such checks are presented, nab the man who presents it—understand?"

"I'll have our men posted in time. Know the hour for the clean-up?"

He crouched back, and as quick as a flash drew his automatic.

"No. You need not bother with New York. I'll take care of that, as Frank Desmond will probably be the one to work this end of it. By the way, I've found out that it's the First National Bank in Philadelphia."

"More than one bank in each city to be watched?"

"No. I am sure they depend for their success upon scattering their field of operations over a large territory, just selecting one prominent bank in each city."

"Pretty artful. But that is Desmond's way of working."

Martin gave him a list of the crooks engaged in the enterprise as far as he knew it and, after a few more words, rang off. His next step was to ring up the Murray Detective Agency. He got the chief on the phone and gave him an account of his work, and ended by saying:

"Send a spotter right up to the Astor to watch Desmond and his wife."

"I'll attend to it directly," was the reply. "If anything transpires during the night I will call you up."

Joe hung up the receiver just as Ruso returned.

"Teleglams gone," said the Jap sententiously.

"Then I'm going to bed."

Martin was worn out, and slept soundly until late next day. After a light breakfast he went down to the office and had a talk with Murray.

"I can't make out the mystery of that stolen necklace," he said to the chief. "But speculating over it won't solve the puzzle. In due time Miss Kingsley will, no doubt, explain the whole thing satisfactorily. Have you heard anything from the spotter?"

"He remained on duty all night shadowing the hotel corridor, but the Desmonds did not make their appearance until this morning, when they came down to breakfast. I sent Jerry up to relieve Tom, and he has phoned in that the Desmonds went back to their room, where they are remaining in close confinement. To-day is Saturday, and as the plan is to be worked on Monday, the crooks are probably all prepared by this time."

Just then the phone rang, and the chief answered it.

"Jerry on the wire. Says Desmond went into the long-distance phone booth. Jerry ducked into the next one and listened. He could hear quite plainly all that Desmond said, as one has to almost shout on the long-distance phone at times. He had Boston on the wire first, then Chicago, next Cincinnati, and ended with Pittsburg. In each instance he called his party by the first name, so Jerry don't know who he spoke to. And in each instance he asked 'Did you get a signed check?' The answer

must have been 'Yes,' for he then said: 'Present it at exactly 11:30 o'clock. I want every one of them cashed at the same moment to insure safety.' Then he rang off and went up to his room again."

"Good enough," commented Joe.

He took the phone, called up the chief of the Secret Service Bureau again and told him what Murray had said, finishing up with:

"It is apparent that every one of Desmond's lieutenants are going to attack the banks all over the country at half-past eleven."

"I'll wire my men, and they will be on the watch for them," said the Federal officer. "That information simplifies matters materially."

Joe then left the office and went down to Wall Street. In one of the big office buildings he found the name of Bertha's uncle on a door, and handing his card to the office boy, was ushered into the private office.

"Well?" demanded the old broker in crusty tones. "What do you want?" Have you found that missing necklace yet?"

"No," said Joe meekly. "I cannot seem to locate it, and wish to have the privilege of searching your house again for clues, as I am confident that the key to the mystery lies there."

"Bosh!" exploded the old man impatiently. "You detective fellows make me sick with your ridiculous clues. You do a whole lot of talking, but mighty little deducting, it seems to me."

"Well, if you are not satisfied, sir, I will withdraw from the case."

"Who said anything about discharging you!" snapped the broker, bridling up aggressively. "You stick to that job until I tell you to quit. I am determined to find out, if possible, where those diamonds have gone."

"All right, but you will have to let me work it out my own way."

"Work it any way you blame please, only show me some results soon—and mighty soon, too, mind you!"

"I'll do my best," said Joe.

"If that's all, I wish you good-day."

"That is all, except that I wish to go up there now to complete my investigations, and a phone call from you to your butler will give me entrance without opposition."

"Be careful not to mention the robbery to my niece in case you should meet her there," warned the old broker."

"I shall be discreet, sir," said Joe, as he took his departure.

A taxi carried him to Miss Kingsley's residence, and when he sent in his card she met him in the parlor.

"Well, well," she said smilingly as she shook hands with Joe and nodded pleasantly. "This call is quite a surprise."

"I've been down-town to see your uncle and get his permission to call and resume my investigations of this house in search of a clue to the thief who stole that necklace from him," said Joe soberly.

She started slightly, and a grave expression crept over her face as she darted a quick, nervous glance up at his eyes. The detective's features remained as blank as a stone wall. He met her gaze coolly, and noted a covert air of trepidation about her. But she quickly mastered all outward show of uneasiness and asked in challenging tones.

"Where do you want to commence, Mr. Martin?"

"In your guardian's bedroom, where I left off."

"Very well. Follow me and I will show you where it is."

She ran lightly up the stairs, followed by Joe, went to the front of the hall and pushed open the door. Joe walked into the room he had once searched so hurriedly and glanced around.

"Will you show me your uncle's slippers?" he asked.

"He has none—never wore them—detests them."

"Just what I suspected. I only asked to verify my suspicion that if he ever rises in the night and has occasion to walk around he goes in his bare feet. I'd like to ask a question."

"And I will answer it, if I can."

"When you all retire for the night do you leave any lights burning?"

"Not one. My uncle has an aversion of doing so. Years ago he once left the gas dimly burning in his bedroom, next to an open window, and the wind blew it out during the night, nearly asphyxiating him. Since then he has always had a horror of leaving lights burning."

"Then how does he get around, in case he happens to rise?"

"Why, he keeps a tallow candle in his bureau drawer, which he lights if it ever becomes necessary to prowl about the house after hours. The use of candles is an old habit of his."

"Has Mr. Gordon got such a thing now?"

"Oh, yes, the stump he has used for several years, as he very infrequently rises in the night after he has gone to bed."

"Show me the candle."

She opened a bureau drawer and took out a piece of red candle about three inches long and handed it to the operative. Joe carefully examined it all over, and then, drawing a pen-knife from his pocket, cut a small piece off the end. He wanted to compare the substance with the grease drops he had found in the library on the floor. He handed the butt back to Bertha, and carefully placed the piece he had taken in his pocket.

There was a silence, during which his keen eyes were roving about the room searchingly. Then his glance rested upon the ornamental mantel. It was supported by two octagonal pillars covered with fancy scroll work, and one of the small panels, amid the carving, stood partly open.

The detective stepped over to it, caught the edge of the panel with his finger-nails and drew it wider open, disclosing a small recess lined with metal. When he peered in he saw that it was empty, but at the same glance he observed that there was a latch protruding from the edge of the panel with which the trap could be locked.

"What is this thing?" he asked Miss Kingsley.

"A secret compartment," she answered promptly, and her face flushed. Then she swiftly stepped forward and closed the panel with a snap, locking it tight.

"Is it used for any particular purpose?" persisted Joe.

"When uncle had that mantel put in he had the compartment made in order to secrete valuables he might have in the house. That was before he bought the safe down-stairs in the library."

"How do you ordinarily open it?"

"This way," she answered, pressing on one of the carved flowers under the moulding, and the door flew open with a metallic clang.

"A secret spring?" said Joe. "Wait! Don't close it!"

He took out his handkerchief and brushed the floor of the little cubbyhole, sweeping out the dust upon a piece of paper, which he twisted up into a knot and placed in his pocketbook.

"What is that for?" asked Bertha interestedly.

"The dust may containe a clue, which my microscope will magnify. I have just formed another theory, which I wish to work out."

"Can I close the door now?"

"I am through. And I am going. Good-day, Miss Kingsley."

He abruptly left the room, leaving the girl staring after him in mute astonishment, and left the house. Hastening home, he got out his microscope and examined the package of dust. There was only one foreign substance in it—a small point of gold with a groove in one side, which looked very much like part of a setting used by jewelers to mount precious stones.

A faint smile crossed his face as he put it in a paper and left his house. A car carried him to Thirty-fourth street, and he went into the pawnbroker's and said to Mr. Omar:

"I want to examine the diamond necklace Miss Kingsley pledged, to see if one of the prongs is missing from one of the settings."

The old fellow nodded and produced the necklace,

handed Joe a strong magnifying glass, and he swiftly examined the settings.

One of them was broken, and the little piece he had found fitted it exactly. When he left the pawnbroker's he was delighted.

"I think I am beginning to see through this mystery at last," he muttered.

CHAPTER NINE

EXPOSING THE PLOT

THE spotter watched Desmond and his wife all that day. At nightfall, while Martin was at the Central Office, he received a phone call.

"Come up to the Astor, quick! Something doing!" said the spotter.

In five minutes Joe was in the rotunda talking to Jerry, who was clad in a fashionable suit of clothing and a silk hat.

"The Desmonds have ordered a taxi!" he whispered hurriedly.

"Did you order another?" asked Joe.

"Of course! Look out! Here they come from the elevator."

They mingled with the crowd, and, gliding over to the corridor that led to the dining-room, peered out the swing doors onto Broadway. Desmond and his wife, attired in the height of style, were just entering a taxicab, and it started down-town. The detectives were on their trail almost instantly in a similar vehicle. They traced the pair to Twentieth street, near Broadway, in the business section. Leaving their car, they hid in a doorway and watched the couple alight in front of a solitary old-fashioned brownstone house, sandwiched between two big business buildings. $t was the last relic in that street of the private dwellings that had once lined the thoroughfare years ago. The house had a lonely, forsaken appearance. Its yard was a mass of weeds, the windows were covered with drawn and broken blinds, the massive door was badly weather-beaten, and it bore the air of never having been occupied. Yet Desmond produced a latch key, opened the front door and passed inside after Jennie.

"The Deserted House," muttered Joe. "He must own it."

"Probably their real rendezvous," commented the spotter.

"I am going in there after them, Jerry."

"You may not come out alive."

"After ten minutes bring in a squad of policemen."

"What's the big idea?"

"I want to arrest Desmond before he can pull off his game."

"Before you find out what it is?"

"The Third Degree may wring a confession from him."

"Won't that spoil the grand round-up?"

"No. He has started the plot working, and it will have to run itself out without him. I'll speak to the captain of the precinct."

He called up the police station and received the assurance that a raiding party would appear within fifteen minutes to act under the directions of Jerry.

The detective had a bunch of skeleton keys in his pocket, a small electric flashlight, his gun, and a keyhole camera-obscura.

He studied the outward appearance of the house a few moments, conferred with the spotter, and then sneaked up on the front stoop. One of his skeleton keys opened the outer door softly, and he stepped into a small vestibule. A glass door confronted him. Not a sign of a light was to be seen through it, nor did he hear a single sound. Then he opened the door and stepped into a dark hall. He felt a thick carpet under his feet, and crouched in a corner listening for five minutes, with his gun in his fist, to see if the opening of the door had rung an alarm. The deathly silence remained unbroken; then he ventured to flash his light. It disclosed a wide hall, open parlor-doors, showing ancient, dust-covered furniture, and a flight of stairs marked with footprints.

"They must have gone up-stairs," he cogitated.

Covering his light, he crept slowly up the stairs, fearful lest a loose board might creak, and, gaining the upper hall, he caught sight of a dim light shining through a crack under a door. The muffled sound of voices behind the door reached his ears as he tiptoed toward it.

"They are in there!" he muttered.

The light shone in the keyhole, and he drew from his breastpocket a thin metal tube, the inside of which was fitted with tiny mirrors set at angles. They were extremely wide angled, of the diminishing type, and carried reflections to a larger mirror at one end. He thrust the other end into the keyhole, where it acted like a periscope. Half the room was reflected by the mirrors, and the image of the room appeared on the large mirror so that he could see it. A plain, old-fashioned room was revealed, lighted by a huge gilt chandelier. At a large center-table sat Desmond and his wife, the former writing. He finally looked up at the woman, and Joe pressed his ear against the panel and heard him say:

"I am going to stay here until the job is pulled off. All the gang is to meet us here with the money. It's our safest retreat, Jennie."

"Why don't you let me onto the trick?" urged the woman petulantly. "Are you afraid to trust me with the secret? I won't leave this house till the job is completed, so it will not be possible for me to blab."

"I had to be very careful of everybody. One false move would have ruined the whole thing." Desmond answered. "I wouldn't even take a chance on you, much as I think of you, Jennie."

"Oh, your caution was all right. An accident might make some one squeal, but the danger is past now, so you can speak out with safety."

"I consider it one of the slickest jobs I ever thought of," the man chuckled. "The idea is this: I got you to get me a genuine check from a big business house, and I went to the bank it was drawn on and got a blank duplicate of it."

"Yes, I understand that much already. But what use will you make of the checks?" demanded the woman in puzzled tones.

"In one hundred cities all over the country I have men who each have secured genuine checks for small amounts and their duplicates in blank."

"I know that much, too."

"Well, it is the duty of each one of the gang to see that the blank checks exactly match every little mark of printing on the genuine checks."

"Cut it short, Frank."

"I can't. It is necessary to explain everything in order to make you understand exactly how we are going to do this trick. Now, then, we each have a good check and its duplicate in blank. The next thing we must each do is to fill in the blank check with the amount of ten thousand dollars, simply forging the handwriting on the check for everything except the signature."

"And then?" she asked impatiently.

"And then," he went on, "we lay the genuine check on top of the blank, which we have filled in with the raised amount, and tear the two checks together, somewhat raggedly, through the middle. Thus we will have four pieces, as each check will be torn in two. Last of all, we keep the part of the genuine check which has the signature and throw away the other half of it. Then we keep the part of the under check, which has the raised amount written upon it, and throw away the part where the signature should go. As the two checks were torn in two together, the ragged edges of the signature part will exactly fit the ragged edges of the blank. When you piece them together the two parts will look as if they were the same check, accidentally torn in two. But instead of calling for ten dollars, the check will now call for ten thousand."

The woman was startled at the magnitude of the trick.

"Good heavens, there is no limit to the amount one could

get out of passing such checks!" she could not help exclaiming.

"Only once," he laughed. "Once stung, the banks will be on the lookout for torn checks after that. It's a game that can only be played once successfully, for the Clearing House will notify all banks in the country to look out for this swindle in the future. Well, to continue: Each of our gang has secured a blank and a genuine check for a small amount. On Monday at half-past eleven in the morning each man will go to a bank in the different cities with his raised torn and mended check, present it for payment, make a plausible excuse to the paying teller for the check being torn, and he will get the money. Then all hands will start for this house. We are to meet here in two weeks and pool the money. It will amount to just one million. We shall divide it evenly, break up the gang, and each man must disappear until the excitement blows over, when the cheat comes to light."

The listening detective was thunderstruck at what he learned. It was the most colossal swindle ever perpetrated. He could not help admiring the ingenuity of it, for such a trick was bound to fool any unsuspecting bank clerk.

"You can't fail!" said Jennie emphatically.

"Every man in the gang is a fine penman, all are courageous, and should any get caught, he will die before telling on the rest of us. I would not have swung this deal if I hadn't happened to get in soft with Bertha Kingsley. It required capital to get all that army of crooks to their stations and stake them for a getaway. The Kingsley girl's money did it for us, although she, of course, does not dream what use we are going to put the money to. The poor simp! She thought I was going into a stock deal in Wall Street to double her capital for her. What a joke!"

There was a short interval of silence, during which Joe kept his eyes glued on the mirror, watching the plotters. Then Jennie said warningly:

"Look out for Joe Martin! He suspects us of doing something crooked or he would not have been trailing us, Frank."

"We tried to down him at the cabaret, you know, but he managed to save his skin by a superhuman effort. It is utterly impossible for him to even suspect what our design is, Jennie."

"He's the shrewdest detective in New York, but he is stacking up against the slickest bunch of penmen in the world."

The detective now withdrew his miniature camera-obscura from the keyhole and replaced it in his pocket, intending to leave the house. He figured that he could not gain anything by remaining any longer, for he had learned at last what their plot consisted of.

He glanced at his luminous-faced watch and saw that he had been almost ten minutes in the house. If he did not reappear, Jerry would lead the raiding platoon of policemen into the place. This he did not want done unless it became absolutely necessary, as he now counted upon arresting Desmond at the bank where he intended to present his torn check. He would then have enough evidence to convict the crook.

He moved back, to retrace his steps down the stairs, and stepped upon a concealed trap-door in the floor of the hall. Instantly there sounded a grinding crash, as the flooring gave way beneath his feet, in the dark. A startled exclamation arose to his lips, and he wildly flung out his hands to save himself, but his fingers only encountered thin air. He felt himself plunging downward, a sickening sensation sweeping through his stomach, and myriads of events flashed before his mental vision. Uppermost in his thoughts was the idea that he was to die the next minute, for he knew instinctively that he was falling two stories into the cellar. There seemed to come an uprush of musty air. Another crash sounded as the trap automatically swung up into place. Then there was a painful bump against his back as he struck the side of the shaft. His spread fingers came in contact with a bit of projecting floor-boarding. It arrested his flight downward for the space of a moment, but almost jerked his arms out of his shoulder sockets. He was dangling in the air. Next he felt his fingers slipping, for his muscles were numbed and his nails were torn. A suppressed groan escaped his lips, and his eyes bulged in a wild glare as he strove ineffectually to see through the dense darkness surrounding him.

Then his fingers relaxed, and he fell again.

With a terrific shock he landed on his side upon a hard cement floor, there flared a blue light before his vision, guns seemed to boom in his ears, and then a dull blank overcame him. He was unconscious.

Hours afterward he recovered, racked with pains, parched with thirst, and confused at finding himself alone in a dark, damp place, with rats running around and water soaking his clothing. When he attempted to rise he found he was too dizzy to stand; there were shooting pains all over him, but after a careful examination he ascertained that no bones were broken, although he was badly cut and bruised. Then he vaguely recalled all that had happened the previous night.

"Fell in a trap!" he cogitated. "Must be the cellar."

Momentarily gathering strength, he finally sat up, and afterward got upon his feet, found his flashlight and looked around. He was in a small, bricked-up section of the cellar, the floor of which was flooded with water from a burst pipe. The place had an iron door, with a tiny window in it. Overhead a square, boarded shaft ascended through the house. When he tried the door he found it locked, and when he shot his light out the little window it gave him a view of a littered cellar. He could not force the door open, and came to the conclusion that escape was not possible unless he got help from outside. One look at his watch showed that it was ten o'clock in the morning, consequently he had been there twelve hours. He paced the floor restlessly, trying every few minutes to get the door open. At last night came—Sunday night, with the faint, distant ringing of church bells reaching his ears.

He wondered if the police, headed by Jerry, had broken into the house when he did not return. Desmond and his wife may have been caught, and he figured that his mysterious disappearance would lead to a search of the premises. This was comforting, as he now had some assurance that the searchers would eventually find him.

But as the night advanced he became worried, for no one appeared. Sleep was impossible in his nervous condition, so he continued to pace back and forth, listening all the while for some encouraging sound. A fear haunted him that he might not be found—that he would perish of thirst and starvation.

Another glance at his watch showed him that it was midnight.

Then he suddenly was startled by hearing the harsh, strident voice of Frank Desmond coming from somewhere out of the darkness:

"Martin! Are you there?"

The detective did not answer, but he swiftly glided over to a corner of his prison, nearest to the door, and waited with breathless suspense to see what his enemy was going to do. Then the voice shouted in terrible tones:

"Martin, I am going to kill you!"

There was another interval of silence, during which the detective drew his automatic and glared through the darkness toward the door. At the little window there came a startling flash, a report, and a bullet struck the wall in back of the cell. Two more shots followed rapidly, each striking in a corner, as the unseen marksman began sweeping the place with his weapon. It was done with the deliberate precision of a cool and calculating mind, for Desmond probably judged that he was located in one spot, and that it was only a matter of time to locate and hit him. The detective did not let the situation put him in a panic. He began to plan a counter measure to foil the man who sought his life.

Six shots were fired through the window, one in each corner, and two at the side walls, but Joe glided into the corner already fired at, and thus escaped the bullet driven

into the corner he had occupied. He was extremely careful not to betray himself by the faintest sound, and reflected that in the interval of silence his tormentor was reloading. A second fusillade of shots now came in swiftly, and he waited until he had counted the fifth report before he raised his own weapon.

He knew that the man was firing through the window. Joe aimed at the sixth flash and let a shot fly. It struck his man, for Desmond yelled with pain. Then Joe thrust his left hand through the window, and his fingers clutched the crook by the hair with a relentless grip. He next shoved his pistol out and pushed it against Desmond's head.

CHAPTER TEN

ROUNDING UP THE CROOKS

"UNLOCK that door, Desmond!" Joe exclaimed. "Quick, or I'll fire!"

He heard the crook cursing, and felt him struggling to pull away, but Joe had too firm a grip on his hair for Desmond to succeed. Besides, the cold muzzle of the revolver pressed against the crook's temple seemed to alarm him, for he stopped struggling and muttered hoarsely:

"Don't shoot!"

The jangling of keys followed, then he unlocked the door, for the cartridges in his pistol were all used up, and he could not fire. The door swung outward, but the detective did not release his hold on his enemy, for he knew that Desmond would aim a blow at his head with the butt of his gun the moment he stepped out the cell door. Joe was a strategist. He kept pushing the door open, keeping it between his enemy and himself as a shield until he had pressed Desmond against the wall behind the door. Then he sprang into the cellar and felt for his flashlight as he let go the man's hair. As he drew it from his pocket it fell to the floor with a metallic clang. He had to search for it, but by the time he recovered the light and shot its rays around Desmond was gone. A search of the cellar failed to show any sign of him. It mortified Joe, but he did not waste any time in vain regrets, but sped up the cellar stairs and gained the lower hall of the house. From that moment his actions were like lightning. Every room was searched thoroughly, but there were no traces of the crook. The whole house showed that it had been raided by the police. The front doors were broken in, the windows were smashed, and the furniture was overturned and broken. On the floor of the room the Desmonds occupied he picked up a crumpled paper covered with writing in cipher. Joe then went out on the stoop.

There stood Jerry, the spotter, on guard.

"Mr. Martin!" he shouted in astonishment.

"I was dumped through a secret trap into a cell in the cellar," explained Joe briefly. "What happened to your raiding party?"

"Why, sir, we waited ten minutes, as you ordered, and then broke into the house. I was in the lead during the rush up-stairs, and could swear that I heard a man and a woman in the front room talking excitedly, and I am sure I saw a light turned out, but when we searched the room there was no sign of any one. A careful search of the house from cellar to attic failed to reveal any sign of you. It got on my nerves, and we smashed every obstacle in our way during the search, but couldn't find you. The police finally gave it up and returned to the station, leaving me behind to guard the place. What puzzles me was that we did not see anything of a prison in the cellar, although we searched it diligently."

"Was there anything peculiar about the cellar?"

"It was as wide as the house, but seemed to me to be shorter than it should have been," answered Jerry.

"You've hit it. The front wall was brick. That was a partition to divide off a forward section, making a cell of it. There was a door in the brick wall, iron-clad on the prison side, which contained a small window; but I noticed that the outside face of the door was covered with brick, and a small heap of brick on the floor was evidently used to fill in the window hole before Desmond came down to attack me. He probably lifted the bricks out of the window hole so he could shoot through at me. The whole thing looked like a solid wall before the bricks were removed, and that is what deceived your raiding party. I just had a fight with Desmond. As you have been hanging around here, you must have seen him enter."

"Not a soul went into this house since the raid, nor has any one except you come out of it," said Jerry emphatically.

"Then Desmond must have a secret tunnel by means of which he can get in and out without using the front doors. Come in with me and we will search for it, Jerry."

They went up-stairs and the detective sounded the walls until he arrived at a spot where a hollow sound resulted from his knocking.

"Here it is! Behind this wainscoting," said Joe decisively.

They could not find a movable panel, so Martin picked up a heavy chair and smashed the woodwork, revealing the passage. He went in, followed by Jerry, and they descended a narrow flight of stairs to the cellar, several other doors opening into the secret passage. In the cellar there was an arched opening in the foundation wall, and the tunnel led them under the next building to the cellar of a beer saloon, in the wall of which there was a massive old door behind a stack of barrels. A flight of stone stairs led up to the street.

"This is the way they got in and out," said Joe as they once more stood on the sidewalk of West Twentieth street. The crooks evidently had the secret entrance made as an avenue of escape in case of a raid by the police. They're a pretty keen bunch; but since Desmond knows I am now free and will have this place watched for his return, he will not come back to it. That makes it bad for me, as I have got to get his trail by to-morrow morning if I wish to arrest him before he can pull off a big swindle he and his gang are engaged in. You and Tom had better keep the house under strict surveilance to-night and to-morrow. As for me, I am half starved and am going to a restaurant to get something to eat. After that I'm going home to get cleaned up and change my clothes. If anything turns up, you can easily get me on the phone."

He parted with the spotter and got his supper, after which a taxi carried him home, where Ruso took him in hand.

A refreshing bath, a change of garments, and a good cigar made him feel like a different man. Then he told the Jap all that had happened, and drew the crumpled bit of paper from his pocket which he had picked up in Desmond's headquarters.

"Another cipher to decipher," he remarked.

As he glanced at it he saw that the code was the same as the one he had already worked out.

It was therefore easy for him to read it. The paper contained a full list of the names of the band of one hundred, and opposite each name was the name of the bank to which he had been assigned. The one selected by Desmond was the Seventh National, and a whoop of joy escaped the detective, and he leaped to his feet waving the tell-tale paper.

"Ruso!" he shouted, "I am in luck. This paper tells me where to look for Desmond to-morrow at 11:30. It also tells who the gangsters are and what banks they are going to rob. Call up the Secret Service chief."

The Jap nodded gravely and obeyed. Then Joe read off the paper into the telephone, and a stenographer at the other end got a copy.

Then Joe went to bed.

He was up early Monday morning, had his breakfast, took his gun and a pair of steel handcuffs and sallied out to the Seventh National Bank, where he held a conference with the cashier. At its conclusion he was secreted under the paying teller's window, with his pistol ready fo

action, and there he waited, with his eyes glued on the wall clock.

At precisely 11:30 Desmond, disguised with a false beard, appeared at the paying teller's window and handed in his torn check for ten thousand dollars, while he mumbled a lie about the way it was accidentally torn.

"How do you want it?" asked the paying teller calmly.

"In one-thousand-dollar bills, please."

The paying teller counted out the money, but he kept the pile so far in on the glass slab near the wicker that Desmond had to reach in both hands to gather up the money. As he did so Joe shot up, grabbed Desmond's wrists, and muttered to the teller:

"Slip the bracelets on him—quick!"

A startled exclamation escaped the crook, but before he could withdraw his arms the teller adroitly handcuffed him.

The crook was stunned with surprise, and when he pulled his wits together he found Joe's pistol staring him in the eye. Two policemen now appeared in the doorway, blocking his exit to the street. They had their revolvers trained upon him, too.

He saw that his case was hopeless, and did not move when Joe came from behind the partition and laid a hand on his arm.

"I've got you with the goods, Frank," said the detective. "And at this very moment one hundred Secret Service men in one hundred cities in the United States are arresting one hundred of your gang, who have presented one hundred phony checks like that one to swindle the banks!"

"There's been a leak, then; there's been treachery!" said Desmond.

"None at all. I worked out the whole thing myself, starting from my investigation of the loss of Bertha Kingsley's missing necklace."

A blank look settled upon the crook's face.

"I've got nothing more to say," he finally muttered. "You know us people, Joe. We shut up like clams when we get pinched, for fear that we might say something to incriminate ourselves."

"Which means that you are mum from now onward," assented the detective comprehensively. "It's all right. We don't have to quiz you. The evidence of those checks is enough to convict you of the conspiracy. Jennie is free yet, but we really don't need her. That's all. Come along."

There was a police patrol wagon at the door now, and Joe and the two officers hustled him into it and sped away before a crowd gathered. At the police station a formal complaint was made, substantiated by the bank cashier, and Frank Desmond was locked in a cell.

Joe then reported at the office, and gave Murray a full account of the whole matter. By that time it was two o'clock, and the detective called up Secret Service and got the chief.

"I've nabbed Desmond," he announced. "We got him with the torn check, and he is now locked up. Have you heard from the States?"

"Every report is in, Joe. Not one of my men missed. We have just one hundred prisoners, with one hundred torn checks. The round-up was an entire success from start to finish."

"Then that ends my job."

"Not quite. I had a call from the Bankers' Association. The president wants to speak to you. Wait until he calls at your office."

The chief rang off. Then Joe turned to Murray with a puzzled expression and told him what the Secret Service man said.

"I wonder what he wants?" he asked.

An hour later the office boy came in with a card for Murray.

"It's the banker," the chief announced.

"Show him in, Johnny."

The boy ushered a portly gentleman into the office. He bowed and faced Joe, with whom he was slightly acquainted.

"Mr. Martin," he remarked, "I have called to thank you for the remarkable service you have rendered the bankers of this country. By foiling that gigantic swindle you have saved us just exactly one million dollars. We are appreciative. As a token of our esteem, we have pooled a fund, and I have been deputed to hand you a check in token of our gratitude. Pray accept this gift with our most sincere thanks."

He handed the astonished detective a check for ten thousand dollars, and as he was a man who disliked to hear expressions of gratitude, he nodded his head, said "Good-day" and abruptly departed.

Joe sat staring at the check, too amazed to speak. An amused smile crept over Murray's face as he saw the amount of the check.

"You are lucky, my boy, but you deserve every cent of it!" he said.

"Why—this is a fortune!" gasped Joe.

"Well, you saved them ten hundred times that amount. Besides that you have broken up one of the most dangerous gangs in the world—a gang that has always baffled the police and been a thorn in their side. By foiling Desmond's plot you have made a reputation unequaled in the detective service, Joe, and I am proud to know that you are a member of my staff. It will reflect some of your glory on my business, and arouse the admiration of your bitterest enemies. Have you given up the Kingsley diamond necklace case?"

"I expect to finish that job to-night," answered Joe. "In fact, I am going up there now to make arrangements to bring the matter to a conclusion, as my clues have taken tangible shape at last."

"Then you know who the thief was?"

"I imagine I do, and am going to prove my theory."

He left the office and made his way to the Gordon residence, where he met Bertha in the parlor. She listened with lively interest to his recital of the adventure he had been through, and at the end of his story a thoughtful expression settled upon her pretty face.

"Then I was responsible for that huge plot to rob the banks?" she said. "It was my money that financed the project. The job would not have been made possible without the money Desmond got from me."

"You were an innocent victim of a shrewd scoundrel," answered Joe consolingly. "That missing necklace of yours seems to have been a sort of hoodoo. It was to solve the mystery that yet surrounds that ornament that I came here."

The same uneasy expression Joe had seen on her face before now returned to Bertha's features.

"What do you mean?" she asked in constrained tones.

"The clues I gathered have given me a theory about the necklace which I would like to test if you will aid me."

"Will there be any publicity to the matter?" she asked in alarm.

"Absolutely none. I am a theorizer. Once I get an idea that I am right I like to prove it. Probably it is a sort of professional instinct, but it is always an obsession with me. Can I count on your help?"

"I would rather have you drop the matter entirely, as the necklace is safe," she answered hesitatingly.

"Safe as far as you are concerned, but recollect that I have got to render a report to your uncle that will satisfy him."

"Well, under those circumstances I will help you," she said reluctantly.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

WHEN Mr. Gordon returned home, at five o'clock, he found the detective in the library talking to his niece. He scowled at Joe unamiably.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I've made the acquaintance of Miss Kingsley," answered Martin glibly, "and have been asking her some

questions. She has learned all about her necklace being missing, and has volunteered to assist me to recover it."

"I didn't want her to know!" snapped the old broker.

"There was no way of concealing the loss from her. See, I have returned Miss Kingsley's photograph which you loaned me! There it stands on the mantel."

"Uncle Thomas," interrupted Bertha eagerly, "let us drop the discussion of that old ornament. I want you to take me out to-night. I am crazy to see Melba in the opera 'Trovatore' at the Academy."

"Of course I will, my dear," he said smilingly. "We have a reserved box."

"I'm going to wear all my diamonds, too," she added impressively. "I do not care to run the risk of having any more jewelry stolen, you know. See—here are my jewels! Aren't they pretty?"

She had, according to Joe's directions, taken her jewel-case from the safe, opened it, and drew out each of her ornaments, which she now held up for her uncle's inspection. In fact, she made him examine each one several times, all the while trying to impress vividly upon his mind that she was afraid of being robbed if she left them in the safe.

The detective looked on with silent satisfaction, for she was now skilfully carrying out part of a plan he had formed. When there came a lull in the conversation the old broker went up-stairs.

"I'm gonig," Joe called after him. "Good-day, sir."

"Good-day," gruffly snapped the old man, walking on.

"You did your part well," smiled Joe. "Give me your latch-key. After you and Mr. Gordon leave the house I will steal in and hide in that closet."

She gave him the door-key and he departed.

Joe had not told Bertha just what his plan was, nor had he confided his theory to her. He merely requested the girl to ask Gordon to take her to the opera to show him her jewels over and over, and to lay stress on her fear that a burglar might break in during the night and steal the ornaments. Adding that he was going to spend the night hidden in the library, he asked for her latch-key so he could get in without letting the servants know what his plans were. Miss Kingsley could not fathom his design, nor did he enlighten her.

It was then about six o'clock, so he went to a restaurant for his supper, then made his way to a show on Broadway to kill time. At eleven o'clock he left the theater, returned to the Gordon house and managed to get inside without attracting any attention.

A dim light was burning in the library, so he locked himself in and spent an hour reading the evening paper; but as the clock struck twelve he heard Gordon and his niece returning from the opera.

Joe unlocked the hall door, partly opened it, and stowed himself in one of the closets just as they entered the room.

"Fine show!" the banker was commenting in satisfied tones.

"Yes, excellent! But I was worried all the time about losing my jewels," Bertha answered. "Help me off with them, uncle. You put them in the case and lock them in the safe securely, as I don't want them stolen."

"Good gracious, how nervous you have been the whole evening about your trinkets!" laughed the old man. "You've done nothing but talk about them from the time we left here until we returned."

"Well, you know my necklace was stolen!"

"I'm sorry that stupid detective told you about the loss. I wanted to conceal it until the bauble was recovered, so as not to distress you, my dear child."

"Don't blame Mr. Martin. It was my fault that he let out the secret, as I missed the gems while he was here, and drew the description of their loss from his lips almost without his consent."

The hidden detective heard him lock the jewelry in the safe, and after a few more desultory words they ascended the stairs to their respective bedrooms to retire for the night. The old broker had turned out the library gas-light, leaving the room in the dark.

As Joe knew that all the servants had gone to bed, he came from his stifling place of concealment and sat in a chair by the rear window.

Several hours passed by uneventfully. The detective did not stir. He had had such a good rest the previous night that he did not feel drowsy. Besides, his mind was so intent upon what he was doing that he did not find his lonely vigil at all tiresome.

Joe was a deep thinker. He reviewed every point in the case he was on, and felt sure that if his present theory failed he would not know what next to do.

After a while the parlor clock struck three.

Joe hastily rose to his feet, glided to the hall door, held it ajar and peered out through the crevice. A small light caught his view. It was coming down-stairs, accompanied by the patter of bare feet. He watched it steadily, and when it reached the foot of the stairs he caught sight of Mr. Gordon, clad in a suit of pajamas, holding a red candle. His eyelids were closed and his footsteps were faltering, but he seemed to walk along all right.

"As I thought—a somnambulist!" Joe muttered, retreating, for the banker was coming toward the library door.

The detective hid behind the draperies hung between the library and the front parlor just as the sleep-walker stepped into the room.

Without the slightest hesitation Mr. Gordon set the candle on the table, and Joe quietly reached over to a tube and mouthpiece in the wall and blew into it, causing a whistle to sound in Bertha's room.

Instantly he heard her running down the stairs.

She stepped into the room, clad in a pink kimona and boudoir cap. There was a startled expression upon her face when the dim light of the candle revealed her uncle stepping toward the safe and the detective behind him, his finger on his lips, to enjoin silence.

That stopped her from uttering the words that arose to her lips, and she and Joe watched the old broker intently.

Upon reaching the safe, he turned the combination, unlocking it, and drew out Bertha's jewel-case, which he placed on the table. There he emptied it. Next he picked up all the jewelry in his left hand, and, seizing the candle in his right, he started to leave the room.

Joe lit the gas and seized the old man by the arm.

"Mr. Gordon!" he yelled, shaking him violently.

The sleeper awakened and tottered, but Joe held him.

"Eh!" he gasped. "What is this?"

"Mr. Gordon—see? It's the detective!" cried Joe, confronting him.

"Good gracious!" The banker gasped helplessly. "What am I doing here?"

"Walking in your sleep."

"Nonsense!"

"And stealing all Miss Bertha's jewels from the safe. See, there they are in your hand! And this is the way you stole her diamond necklace. You were going to hide the jewels in the secret compartment in the mantelpiece in your bedroom, where you hid the necklace."

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Gordon, aghast, as he glared at the jewels in his hand and then at the costume he wore. "Did I steal the necklace, too?"

"Only for safekeeping," Joe assured him.

"You did take the necklace from the safe!" Bertha interrupted. "I saw you do it. And I saw you hide it in the secret compartment; but I did not know you were a somnambulist. I thought you were a thief."

"Naturally! Naturally!" said the old banker, nodding.

"It filled me with horror," Bertha went on. "I could not understand how you could be so mean as to rob me. It worried me dreadfully. I was hurt, too; but I resolved that you would not profit by the theft, so I went in your room next day, abstracted the necklace from its hiding-place and pawned it. In doing so I had two purposes: One was to remove the necklace from all chance of ever losing it again, and the other idea was to raise $50,000, which I desired to lend to a friend who needed the money."

"You did just right under the circumstances," admitted Mr. Gordon weakly. "Why shouldn't you think your uncle was a scoundrel when you saw me deliberately rob y

Of course, as we all know now, I was not responsible for what I did; no sleep-walker is."

"It makes me feel guilty now of having done you a great injustice," said Bertha. "It was my business to investigate before condemning you. I was very nervous over it, however, which probably accounts for my impulsive action. I hope you will forgive my unjust spirit, Uncle Thomas?"

"Forgive nothing!" growled the old man. "It's my duty to ask you to forgive me, as I was the innocent, yet guilty, one. And to show you how ignorant I was of what I had done, Bertha, I was fool enough to hire Joe Martin to hunt for the necklace when I found it was missing from your jewel-case. Well, well, well! This is a queer state of affairs. How did you find out enough to suspect and trap me, Martin?"

"Your bare footprints and red candle grease on the floor told me that you came down here and got the necklace. A prong broke off of one of the settings when you put it in the secret compartment. It showed me where you hid it. Remember the finger and footprints I took of you? Well, they gave you away, too. I've been ransacking this house while you were in it and while you were out of it. I even caught Miss Bertha pawning the necklace, but was mystified over what looked like her theft of the ornament, and puzzled to see her putting it in pawn, when I knew she did not have to raise money that way."

"Well, as the whole matter has come to light, all I can say is that you have done a mighty fine bit of detective work, Joe."

"That is quite a nice compliment—coming from you, sir."

The old man chuckled and picked up his candle.

"I'm going to bed," he announced. "It's pretty plain that you and my niece have struck up quite a friendship between you behind my back. I'll leave her to see you to the door, as it's getting pretty late to entertain company. The only amends I can make will be to redeem the pledged necklace to-morrow. If you ever need $50,000 again, Bertha, come to me and I shall furnish you with all the money you desire. Good-night!"

His tall bony figure disappeared, going up the stairs, and Joe turned to the young girl and held out his hand.

"I am very sorry that this interesting case is ended," he remarked, "for it will deprive me of the infinite pleasure of seeing you again, Miss Kingsley. The police have got possession of more than the amount Desmond borrowed from you, and I shall see that your money is returned, for the crook had a private bank account."

Bertha placed her little hand in his and looked up into his eyes shyly.

"The ending of this case need not end our friendship," she said insinuatingly. "I could see that your remarkable work has raised you in my uncle's estimation, so that he will never object to your calling on me."

"But how about you? Are you interested enough to entertain me as a warm friend?"

"Haven't I shown it?" she laughed.

Then she led him to the front door.

"Good-night!" he said.

She held up her face and he impulsively caught her in his arms, and with joyously beating heart pressed his lips to hers.

"Good-night—sweetheart!" he said as he raised his hat and descended the steps of the front stoop.

Our next number will contain a most remarkable detective story, entitled "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Charles F. Oursler.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories that have been published in this magazine are well worth reading, if you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

No.
1 THE EEL MAN, by Robert Carlton Brown
2 ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, by F. W. Doughty
3 THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, by Armstrong Perry
4 UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL, By Dr. Harry Enton
5 THE SILKEN SHEATH, by Crittenden Marriott
6 A FORTUNE TELLER'S SECRET, by Gladys Hall
7 THE MYSTIC EMBLEM, by Marie Coolidge Rask
8 THE CARDS OF FATE, by William Goode
9 MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS, By William Hamilton Osborne
10 THE INNER WHEEL, by Octavius Roy Cohen
11 THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, By Robert Carlton Brown
12 THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, By Charles F. Oursler
13 UNDER A MASK, by Crittenden Marriott
14 CASE 4,444, by Gladys Hall

If you cannot procure any of the numbers you want from your newsdealer, send us the price, ten cents, in money or postage stamps, and we will mail them to you postage free. Address

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York.

NEWEST THINGS

AS a substitute for the grocer's scoop an inventor has patented a pump that lifts dry articles from their containers, which remain closed to exclude dust.

In an experimental way, at least, an Italian inventor's wireless apparatus transmits written messages, sketches, shorthand characters and various designs.

Cultural stations of the United States Bureau of Fisheries produced more than 5,000,000,000 fish and eggs in the year ending with June, a new high record.

Because many accidents have occurred when trains could not be stopped in time a London railroad terminal has been equipped with hydraulic buffers.

To make the opening in a folding automobile wind shield wind and waterproof when desired is the purpose of a recently patented celluloid attachment.

South African chemists have found that oil and its products can be obtained from the coal mined in Angola, which in itself has been a failure as fuel.

Operated by electricity obtained from a lighting circuit, a new machine wets, sweeps, scrubs and dries a floor over which it is propelled by human power.

Pressing a lever at the driver's seat throws new anti-skidding chains under the rear wheel of an automobile.

The development of the use of coal gas for motor power has passed the experimental stage in England.

A California inventor's suitcase is provided with legs and can be unfolded and set up to form a writing desk.

Italian railroads are experimenting with lignite, peat and peat mixed with other substances as locomotive fuel.

The United States Weather Bureau has established a station in Honduras that reports to Washington by wireless.

THE SACRIFICE

By BEULAH POYNTER

THE sweet-faced Mother-Superior greeted the heavily veiled woman in the reception-room with a smile. She consulted the card she held and, as she extended her hand, said: "Mrs. Stewart? It's been many years since you paid us a visit."

"Yes," replied the waiting woman. "It's been many years, many, many years ago," but she did not take the Mother-Superior's outstretched hand — apparently she did not see it, and there was a little choke in her voice. The good woman ignored the other's oversight, and sat down beside her. "Ten years and over," she murmured. "Yes, it must have seemed many, many years to a mother separated from so adorable a daughter as Edith."

She flung herself on her knees and wrapped her arms about the girl's slender figure.

The veiled woman turned suddenly. "Is she adorable? Is she pretty? Tell me. I am mad to know."

"Suppose you see her and judge for yourself," said the Mother-Superior. "I have found her both good and beautiful."

"Beautiful!" gasped the mother in ecstasy. "Oh, thank God! Thank God!"

"She was very small when you last saw her," continued the Mother-Superior; "but eight years of age. You will find her much changed."

"But she is still fair—she still has her golden curls?"

"Not golden," was the reply, "but she is still fair—very fair."

The mother almost sobbed—her hands twitched convulsively. She was not so well dressed as most of the women who came to visit their daughters in the school. Her dress had good lines, but was almost shabby, her black gloves were cotton; her well-polished shoes showed long wear. It was late fall, but the hat she wore was straw. But when she spoke one forgot her shabbiness, for her voice was low and beautiful, with just a touch of accent. There was an air of quiet refinement and culture about her, such as one finds about Southern women of old families which have fallen into straightened circumstances.

Mother-Superior waited for her to collect herself, and there was a silence of several moments' duration, then Mrs. Stewart spoke: "I am going to take Edith away with me," she said.

"I am sorry," said the other. "I had hopes she would take the veil. She is intensely religious; we need her."

"I need her more," cried the mother, the very intensity of her reply startling the other woman. "I am going to take her to France."

"France!" exclaimed the Mother-Superior. "With the war going on?"

"Yes!" Mrs. Stewart sprang to her feet and paced the small room nervously. "Yes. We are going to-day. This afternoon. See, here are our tickets." She opened her bag and showed them. "I've everything ready to start."

"But, my dear lady, it is so sudden. Edith has no clothes; she is unprepared. She——"

"She shall have everything she needs when she reaches Paris! Paris!" She gave a hysterical laugh. "Oh, it's been so long, so long I've waited, and now my dreams have come true! We are going!" She dropped abruptly into the nearest seat and pressed her handkerchief to her veiled face.

The Mother-Superior rose and, going to her, laid a gentle hand on her shoulder. "My daughter, you are suffering. Suppose you tell me your troubles. Perhaps I can help you."

"Suffering!" The woman laughed. "No, I'm happier than I've been for twenty years! The thing I have worked for, sacrificed for, has come to pass, and I'm going to have my little girl again. My little girl!"

"You loved your child very much, and yet in fifteen years you have come but once," said the Mother-Superior. "I cannot feel that it was of your volition you have neglected her——"

"Neglected her!" cried the other, her voice poignant with emotion.

"You must have made some mighty sacrifice in staying away."

"I didn't," the mother replied. "Don't you suppose I ached for those baby arms about my neck, those wet baby kisses on my mouth? And I gave her to you when she was but three years old, a little, toddling, rosy-cheeked, yellow-curled mite, with her soft, rounded body that I loved. I gave her to you when I wanted her so, I needed her so, and I went away determined never to see her again, until I could come to take her away."

"But why, my daughter, why?"

For reply the mother walked to the window so that the strong morning light would fall upon her, showing the rusty streaks of brown in the plain black dress she wore, the patches on the cotton gloves, the cracks in the polished shoes. Then she raised her veil. For a moment the Mother-Superior did not comprehend, then she drew back startled, horrified, for the woman on whom the sun shone so relentlessly was a mulatto. Her hair was kinky, her skin was dark, and while her features were not of the negro, everything about her proclaimed her colored ancestry.

"You—you are not Edith's mother!" the Mother-Superior cried.

The other woman's lips curled; she bowed her head in mute agony.

"Oh, the poor child, the poor child," said the Mother-Superior. She could not look at the woman before her; for a moment her gaze wandered out the window, and unconsciously she watched a yellow butterfly fluttering about and dipping in and out of a clump of late roses. When she turned back to her visitor she saw a drop of blood was trickling down her chin from where the strong white teeth had so cruelly bitten into her lower lip.

"My daughter," the Mother-Superior cried compassionately, "my poor daughter, you have suffered; can't you tell me?"

"I didn't mean to see her again when I brought her here. I meant to give her up absolutely," the woman replied in a voice so hard and tearless it was unrecognizable. "But I couldn't do that—but—may I tell you all about it—everything?"

"Please do." The Mother-Superior took her icy cold hand and pulled her to a seat beside her. The warm, human touch unnerved the other a moment, then she continued, paying no heed to the interruptions with which the Mother-Superior now and then punctuated her story.

"My father was a Frenchman," she said, her voice still hard and tearless. "My mother a mulatto, a West Indian. Though he was a white man, he married her. She died at my birth. I was born in the West Indies. My father was a well-educated, cultured man. After her death he took me to France, and I was reared as a white woman. No one questioned my parentage. At sixteen I was considered a beautiful girl. It was at that time my father moved to this country. Being a Frenchman, he had no realization of what was in store for me, or how closely the color line is drawn. Almost on our arrival here he was taken ill and died. I was left alone in a strange country, scarcely able to speak the language, and in a very few weeks discovered I was a pariah. My father had left me a few thousand dollars, but I had no relatives in France, and few friends—for he had been a reticent man, going about but little—so it did not occur to me to return there. I was clever with my needle, but found such employment was not easy to secure because I was a 'nigger.' At first I did not grasp what they meant by the word, thinking it was just a name for foreigners. When I realized it was a word applied in derision to those of darker skin, I was ill for a week. Then I began to look about me at the 'niggers,' my people, the people with whom I was doomed to associate all my life. Have you ever felt your soul writhe, your flesh squirm and tingle, your whole body revolt at some sickening, degrading, loathsome thing? That is how I felt every time I looked at one of my race! My race, when I was three-fourths white! I found a horrible fascination in watching their black, greasy faces, their thick lips, their bullet heads, their kinky hair. The blacker, the uglier, the more terrible the fascination. I used to see how close I could come into contact with them without touching them, feeling that I would die should my hand touch one of theirs. I was half-mad with it all. For hours I would study my face in the mirror. My hair was kinky. I had called it curly. My skin was dark, but there all resemblance ceased, yet I was one of them; sometimes I would laugh and laugh at the whole absurdity of it, the inhumanity, the injustice. Then I would weep and weep until I hadn't strength to walk. Sometimes I would rave and curse God, lashing myself into a frenzy until I became unconscious. At first when I discovered that there was no place for me in a decent white neighborhood—not even in a hotel or restaurant—I went to a less respectable place. I secured a room in a cheap boarding-house, and there I met all the dregs of the city—women of the streets, their lovers, crooks—all better than I because their skins were white. Delicately reared, educated, I sickened in my environment and almost died. I should have died but for a mulatto girl, who like myself was one of the misplaced ones in the world. She nursed me back to life, and I cursed her for it. She only laughed at me. 'I know how you feel,' she said, 'there's no use to kick about it. You're up against a stone wall; there's a door, but you nor I haven't got the key.' The men in the street leered at me. I told you I was pretty; they found me so. My colored friend, Marie was her name, told me I was a fool to try to be virtuous, there was no virtue for girls like us. 'You couldn't marry one of those black men,' she cried—I shuddered at the thought—'and no white man will marry you—what are you going to do?' 'I can die,' I answered. 'Yes, a lot of 'em do. Oh, there's a lot of pretty colored girls who snuff out their own lives every year."

"No!" cried the Mother-Superior. "Oh, no!"

"Yes. Marie knew. They are girls more white than colored, with white souls and instincts like mine; the struggle and the hopelessness are too much for them, so they take the easiest way out. I wanted to. I tried several

times to kill myself, but I hadn't the courage, also I thought some day I could go to France. I hadn't much money left, and I was getting afraid to risk it, and the trip would be so expensive. I used to have nightmares, and dreamed I was married to some black negro, that his arms were about me. I'd wake up wringing with perspiration, and crying convulsively. Just about the time I made up my mind to risk everything, take more of my fortune and use it to return to France, Edith's father came into my life. He was a big blond German, curiously blond, almost an albino in his pale coloring. I think it was his decided fairness which first attracted me. Anyway, I fell in love with him. I had never cared for a man before, and my love had all the elements of a young girl's first infatuation, combined with an intense passion such as only a woman who had suffered as I had could feel. From the first John Stewart's intentions toward me were honorable so far as marriage was concerned. At the time I was employed as a manicure in a beauty parlor. It was respectable work, though I abhored it, but it was not for me to be particular. I must live, and few occupations were open to me. John Stewart drifted into the shop, and that was the way I met him. I never questioned the reason for his leisure, his highly polished nails, his well-massaged face; I just loved him. In three weeks we were married. He told me he knew I was a colored girl, but that I was so 'damn pretty' he could overlook it. After we were married I discovered why he could overlook it. He had learned I had some money; report had made it many times the actual amount. He was furious when he found the amount so small. But to John Stewart, a man who lived wholly by his wits and the foolishness of others, two thousand was a pretty fair sum. Anyway, I handed it over without a murmur. I was like a dog in my worship for him. Had he asked me to die, I would gladly have done so. For three blissful weeks I lived and loved and thanked God for this big wonderful man He had brought into my life. Then the bitter awakening came. Friends of his began to drop in on my Paradise—strange persons of the underworld, men and women. There were cards—whisperings of crimes—and I began to grow afraid. They treated me as less than a servant. I wasn't shown the commonest civility. I was John Stewart's 'nigger wife.' When I demanded that his friends show me the respect due his wife, he laughed at me and said: 'Well, ain't you a nigger? White people can't respect niggers. You're getting better treatment than you deserve.'

"All the wonderful love I had for him became frozen; I didn't grow to hate him, I just became numb, utterly without feeling. I accepted my place as a household drudge. I became John Stewart's 'nigger wife.' I seemed to have never been anything else; all the past was so vague, it was as if it were a story belonging to some one else or something that I had read in a book. Then my baby was born. She looked like him. The ice around my heart thawed when I took her in my arms and looked into her wonderful baby face—a little white face with big, wondering blue eyes and soft yellow curls, yellow as cornsilk and soft and clinging as cobwebs. I adored her—I worshiped her. All my starved repressed affection I showered on her. Day and night I lived, dreamed, hoped for that little yellow-haired mite. I forgot the stain upon me that might descend upon her; I just gloried in her beauty. One day John Stewart saw me holding her in my arms, cuddling her close. I shall never forget his laugh. 'Wait till she's grown,' he muttered. 'See how she'll repay you for all your love when she realizes her mother's a nigger!' I had never thought of it before; but with his words came the knowledge of what the future would mean to her as well as to me. Then it was I determined to bring her to you. My daughter should never endure what I had suffered. I made up my mind, regardless of what pangs of agony it would cost me, to put her absolutely out of my life; she was white, blonde in face, in a white school, reared with white children, and her mother dead—at least to her. She would have an equal chance with other girls; but let it be known she had one drop of colored blood in her, and she was damned forever.

"It took all the courage I possessed to prepare for the journey which brought me to you. Many, many bitter tears were wrapped in the little garments I mended and packed away. Once I almost lost consciousness as the picture of the long, empty, desolate years flashed before me; but I never wavered in my course. She was just three years old when I gave her to you—a laughing, healthy, rosy-cheeked baby—and I meant never to see her again. Do you remember, I didn't kiss her good-by? I wouldn't raise my veil for fear you would recognize the colored blood in me and brand her for it. Her little fingers clung to mine, oh, so tightly, I had to loose them, and she held out her arms to me when I walked away. Oh, my God! Mother, I can feel those baby fingers yet; I couldn't get the feel of them off my fingers. They were soft and hot and went into the bone. I used to pray just to get rid of the feel of them. I went home in a daze—half-mad, I suppose. My eyes were burning like coals, but dry. My husband asked me where Edith was. I refused to tell him; when he cursed me and struck me I welcomed the physical blow as an antidote for my mental pain. Night came. I started to baby's crib to put her to bed, then realized that never again would I tuck her in bed, hear her good-night prayer, nor sing her to sleep; I threw myself on the floor by her crib and buried my face in the bed-clothes. A little shoe was lying in the center of them. I clutched it in my hand—I talked to it, I kissed it, then I fell in a dead faint that lasted till morning.

"Sometimes the desire to go to the convent and tear her away from you was almost stronger than human strength could withstand, but I fought it off. I used to picture her each day, seeing her grow in my mind's eye. Every letter you wrote about her I cherished. I talked so much to myself that John Stewart's friends called me 'nutty.' He tried every way to find out where she was, but I never gave my secret away. Then he and some of his pals were arrested for a safe robbery and sent to prison, so I was left alone again.

"The desire to see my baby became too strong for me. I determined just to look at her, just to touch her once more. Do you know what I did? For weeks before I came I used preparations on my hair and skin to lighten them, so that I would dare to raise my veil, dare to kiss her, and I did it. I saw my little girl—quite a big little girl. I held her in my arms, I kissed her, and you looked on and never dreamed the truth.

"After I left her, a wonderful, deliciously happy idea came to me! We would go to France. I would take my daughter and go back to France, where, when she realized what I was, it would make no difference—where the stain in her blood would not ostracize her. Money was the handicap now. I was practically penniless, but I would work and save.

"From the time I decided to claim my child I saved money in every conceivable way. I gloated over my pile as it grew. No task was too menial if it meant some pennies gained. Many a time I was tempted to steal, but I never did. I washed, I scrubbed, I went without food. I did all kinds of work. But the goal was so far away. I was still pretty, men were attracted by me. I flung morality to the winds, and capitalized my beauty. My goal was almost reached when I was robbed. Broken-

heartedly I started all over again, this time banking as I went along. Now, I've all the money we need. I want my baby, and I'm going to make her happy."

For several moments the Mother-Superior did not break the silence after the woman ceased speaking, the full horror of the sordid story sinking into her consciousness.

"You've—you've been a bad woman, daughter," she almost whispered.

The woman shuddered. "Yes, but only for her. That is all past; the new life will be clean and good. Surely I have suffered enough to be forgiven."

"She'll never know?" queried the Mother-Superior.

"No, oh, no!" cried the other.

The holy woman looked at her silently, and turned to go. "I'll send her to you. It will be a shock; she knows nothing of such misfortunes as yours. She—I pray God it will come right. I'll send her to you."

The woman at the window gripped her hands together until the nails cut cruel ridges in the flesh. She scarcely breathed; never once did her eyes waver from the door through which the Mother-Superior had departed. At last she came; she heard her laughing and running through the hallway which led to the door. A slip of a girl with gold-brown hair, curious light-blue eyes, a full rosy mouth, and pale, white skin—a girl in the first flush of a glorious womanhood, slim, graceful, beautiful. She stood in the doorway, the Mother-Superior a background for her. Like a cameo she was in her plain white dress.

"My mother?" she questioned in a high girlish treble.

"Yes," the woman answered; her voice was throaty, so choked as to be scarcely audible. She advanced toward the girl with arms outstretched. Closer and closer they came toward each other—the mother timid, afraid, the girl sensitive, instinctively feeling something in the charged atmosphere. "My baby," the mother breathed.

The girl's pale eyes dilated. Her white face became paler. One little hand caught at her throat. "You—you aren't my mother!" she gasped.

"Yes," the woman answered.

"No!" cried the girl. "No!" She reached out imploringly to the Mother-Superior. "Why, you are—you are a colored woman."

A moan came through the white lips of the woman. "I'm your mother," she persisted.

"Oh!" The girl again clutched her throat. She looked at the Mother-Superior, then at the pathetic figure in the shabby black gown. Almost wonderingly, like a child studying a feather on a sticky finger, she held her own white hand before her eyes and studied it. "Oh, God, why?" she sobbed.

"Baby! My baby!" cried the mother, all the pent-up passion, the restrained mother-love of years burst forth in that cry. She flung herself on her knees and wrapped her arms about the girl's slender figure, enveloping her in convulsive caresses. The girl threw up her arms and tried to draw away. A fierce revulsion showed in her face, there was a little struggle, then she tore herself from the clinging arms and rushed from the room. The woman on the floor struggled to a sitting posture. "Mother—my baby!" she cried, but the Mother-Superior had followed the frantic girl out of the room. The woman rose, she stumbled—it was impossible to walk, the floor was whirling around and around, the walls were closing in about her. She pushed them back with her toil-worn hands, she reached the window, and rested against it, letting the breeze blow in her face.

She heard a cry, there was a tramping of feet, more cries; then the Mother-Superior entered the room. The woman turned inquiring eyes to her. "My daughter," the Mother-Superior said, then she put her arms about her, "my poor, poor little mother, you must be brave."

"She—she is dead?" said the woman, her voice almost as cold and emotionless as before.

"Yes; she flung herself from the top floor window. God help her——"

The woman interrupted her. She opened her shabby bag, and took out a roll of bills; these she put in the Mother-Superior's hand. "For her," she muttered. "Give her a real burial." Then she laughed, the laugh of a damned soul. She turned abruptly toward the outer door; for a moment she paused, then she pulled down her veil.

"You aren't going?" stammered the nun. "Won't you see her again?"

"No; I saw her. I killed her. Good-by."

"Daughter!" sobbed the Mother-Superior.

The woman laughed again. "Give her a white girl's burial!" she cried shrilly. "I won't be there! Give her a white girl's burial." And she was gone.

Read "A Romance of the Quays," by Wesley Lyman. Our next number contains this great story.

RIDDLE OF THE "HEAD OF GOLD"

STRANGER than fiction is the story of Annibale Tosci, once a beggar, who gained a fortune by solving the riddle which for fifty years had puzzled all of Italy. About a century ago there lived in Naples a wealthy but eccentric Frenchman, who erected in a busy street near the Monastery of San Vito a plain, unlettered marble shaft surmounted by a bust of himself. He died, and in his will it was provided that these words should be inscribed upon the monument:

"On the 1st of May each year I have a head of gold."

Intense curiosity was aroused, and when May Day came around the street about the shaft was thronged. Some of the superstitious watched until dusk, believing that a miracle would come to pass and the head be changed to gold. Nothing happened, but for fifty years each first of May found the street filled with curious onlookers. Excavations showed that nothing was concealed beneath the foundation, and tests proved that the monument was marble throughout. Finally it was agreed that the inscription was a bit of sardonic humor, and only a few made the annual pilgrimage.

Then Annibale Tosci, the ragged beggar, found the solution of the mystery and became famous in a day. He had observed that a long shadow was cast by the monument, and armed with a pick, he went at sunrise on the next May Day to the famous street. Carefully marking the spot where the shadow of the head fell, he began to dig. Only a foot beneath the surface he found a rotting bag filled with gold.

Statements vary as to its amount, but it is known to have been a large sum, and Tosci was permitted to keep the greater part of it. Casting aside his shiftless habits, he became an industrious and wealthy farmer and landlord. When he died, several years ago, a large estate was divided among his heirs. The shaft has been removed, for the inscription is no longer true.

THE DUEL IN THE DARK

By GEO. F. LYON

AT the close of a long day's ride I found myself making my way slowly along a dreary bit of country road in Southern California. As far as I could see on either hand were wide-spreading fields of damp, marshy land, with here and there small clumps of low, stunted bushes. A few miles across the fields to my right the Santee rolled slowly through cultivated fields of cotton and rice.

I urged my tired horse on, eager to find some place of shelter from the night and rapidly approaching storm, both of which were almost upon me. So deeply was I engrossed in considering whether to turn about and go back or not that I had not noticed that my horse had left the turnpike upon which he had been traveling, and was now slowly picking his way along a narrow grass-grown path, or what seemed to once have been a road or driveway leading up from the main road to a group of trees, through the tops of which a roof and several chimneys could be seen. Knowing that shelter of some kind was at hand, I pushed rapidly on, not a little pleased at the sudden change in my unpleasant prospects, although I was somewhat surprised to find such a place as this appeared to be, in this out-of-the-way, deserted region. The place was apparently deserted and fast going to decay. A number of large, overgrown trees shaded and hung low over the roof, which was green with moss and fallen leaves. The loose clapboards rattled and clattered in the wind, and a broken window shutter flapped dismally to and fro. The windows, too, were broken out in many places and gone, and the wide steps of the veranda were rotten and unsafe. The path or driveway leading down to the road was full of tall grass and stones, with nothing to mark its course save a low, scraggy hedge, thriving in its neglect. The lawn, sloping gradually down to the road, was also thickly grown with tall, rank weeds and bushes. The whole place showed an air of neglect and ruin.

I dismounted from the horse, led him around the house to the stable in the rear, and succeeding in finding some loose hay in the loft overhead, I threw him an armful and went back around the house again and up the steps of the veranda to the front door, just as the rain began to fall in great, pattering drops.

Then I heard a step on the gravel path behind me, and turning I saw an old negro standing at the corner of the house, regarding me with curious eyes.

He lifted his old battered hat, and with a feeble bow, he said in a remarkably distinct accent:

"Howdy do, sah?"

I returned his greeting in rather an amused tone, for I could not help smiling a little at the sight of his bent figure covered with an old army blue coat soiled and torn, reaching down nearly to his heels. He had on a pair of gray cotton pants with huge patches of some darker material sewed conspicuously on each knee, while his feet were thrust into a pair of old shoes which had evidently seen their better days long before. He appeared to be quite old, for he moved with slow, feeble steps, leaning heavily on a stout cane or staff.

The sound of his voice somewhat startled me, for I supposed the place to be entirely deserted, but concealing both my surprise and amusement at the sight of his grotesque figure, I quickly returned his greeting:

"Hello, Uncle," I answered. "I saw that we were going to have a storm and I thought I might find shelter here for the night."

He looked at me in surprise, then hobbled slowly up the steps of the veranda to where I stood, and looked me carefully over from the tip of my shoes to the top of my hat. Then, without a word, he thrust his hand down into the depths of his trousers pocket, drew forth an old iron key and slowly proceeded to unlock the door.

After some little fumbling and twisting he at length swung it back, creaking and groaning on its rusty hinges, and motioning me to follow, went in. A damp, musty smell greeted us, and as he turned to close the door, I glanced about the hall in which we stood. Great patches of plaster hung in masses from the wall and ceiling through which the bare laths could be seen beneath. Broken pieces of furniture were scattered about here and there. The floor creaked woefully as we walked along the hall and entered a long room opening to the left.

This apartment, too, had the same appearance of age and neglect as the hall through which we had just passed. Countless festoons of cobwebs hung from the ceiling, reaching nearly down to the floor; while the furniture of the room, once elegant and luxurious, was now broken and scattered about in confusion. The carpet was damp with mold and full of holes, and what once had been heavy, crimson draperies, hanging about the windows, were now a moth-eaten mass of rags. A few old-time pictures and portraits were tilted from the walls, but they were so thickly covered with mold and dust that it was well-nigh impossible to tell now what they once had been.

I went to the window and, thrusting aside the curtains, looked out, and plainly saw that my chances of getting away that night were fast disappearing, for the rain fell in torrents, and the sky looked dark and grim; evidently it had settled down for a rainy night.

I went back and, drawing an old arm-chair up to the fire-place, at one end of the room, I sat down, and the old negro soon followed my example by depositing himself in another on the opposite side.

The dampness of the room soon began to make itself felt, and, knowing the folly of spending a night in that wet place, I got up and gathered some of the old broken chairs and tables scattered about the room, and piled some of them in the fire-place. I then sat down again and proceeded to make myself as comfortable as the circumstances would permit.

I presume my companion thought that I was taking a good deal of liberty, although he said nothing, but sat there watching me with an attention which I could not help smiling at in spite of myself. As soon as I sat down again, he produced an old corncob pipe, and began to fill it with some loose tobacco leaves, which he fished from some of the numerous pockets of his coat. I gave him some of my own fine-cut, for which he seemed greatly

pleased, and, atfer filling his pipe, he lit it, and sat puffing away in evident enjoyment.

For several moments we sat in silence, and I looked about the old low raftered room, and wondered who and where the owner of all these faded surroundings was.

"Who owns this old place, Uncle?" I asked.

He looked at me a moment as if surprised at my question.

"Don't you know this place, sah?" he asked, looking at me sharply.

I shook my head, and he went on:

"I reckoned that everybody knew this place. I take it that you are a stranger in these parts."

"Yes," I replied. "I never was in this part of the country until to-night."

He nodded his head in reply to this, and then continued:

"Well, this place used to belong to the old Colonel. You have heard tell of Colonel Darrel, sah?"

"No," I interrupted. "Who was the Colonel?"

"Why, he was my old master way back before the war, and he owned this place and another down the river. But after young Marse Chet fought a duel with a young French fellow that come up from Savannah, old Marse he shut this old house up, and nobody ever came near it again. People round these parts say that it is haunted, and that every Christmas night the ghost of young Marse Darrel and that young French fellow that he fought the duel with come back with all the others that was here that night it happened."

I now began to get a little interested, and thinking perhaps it might help pass away a dreary hour, I asked the old man to tell me about the house, and why it was haunted. At first he did not seem inclined to say much about it, but after I gave him a silver dollar, he told me the story of the house, the Colonel, his only son, Chester, and the duel. It was many years ago that it all happened, and young Chester, the only son and child of Colonel Darrel, had just returned from college to the North. The days that followed his return home were full of life and excitement. The young man was naturally a gay, reckless sort of a chap, and whenever he was at home or abroad, he was constantly surrounded by a company of young men as wild as himself.

The Colonel was a stern, gruff man, who cared neither for gaiety nor pleasure, and looked on with disapproval while Chester and his boon companions were carousing and riding about the country on the old man's best horses, and spending his money.

The nights were generally spent in drinking, and the morning light often found them lingering over the cards. For some time the colonel looked calmly on, thinking that perhaps after Chester had sowed a few of his wild oats that he might settle down and become a dutiful son, but the gay company came and went and there was ever a constant round of boisterous festivities. For over a year things at the old place went on in this way. When young Darrel was not at home carousing and riding about the country and drinking at the taverns, he was away rioting and having a good time somewhere else with his father's money. It was all in vain that the Colonel talked and reasoned with his son. It was also all in vain when his good old mother pleaded with him to reform and become a dutiful son. And equally in vain was it when the old Colonel, unable to any longer sustain himself, raved and swore that there should be a stop put to these scandalous proceedings. Chester only listened patiently while his father talked, and when he was gone he laughed over it, and things still went on in the same old way.

At length, seeing that all pleadings were without any effect upon their wayward son, the Colonel and his wife finally decided that they would go away—leave the old place to Chester and his associates, and perhaps some time after they were gone, he would miss father and mother and reform. One day the family servant drove them down the river to another place owned by the Colonel, leaving the mother's old home to the son, and his wild companions.

The servants soon began to be more in fear of the young master than they were of the old one. Instead of having the desired effect, things grew rapidly from bad to worse, and the whole neighborhood for miles stood aghast at the stories whispered about Chester's doings.

Christmas night came; the old folks had been gone over a month now, and a gay company of young sports came. Among them was a French fellow, Claude Gaston—a gay, reckless sort of a young chap, fond of cards and wine. All Christmas day was passed in having a good time, and after nightfall the gay company gathered in the long dining-room, and the festivities began.

Chester Darrel and the young Frenchman from Savannah were seated at a table playing faro. Darrel was a good player, but Gaston was a better one, and soon his superior skill began to tell against his companion. Gaston was calm and collected, while Darrel seemed flushed and excited; his hand was unsteady from the effects of the wine he had been drinking, and his eyes gleamed with feverish excitement as he raised the bet already on between them to his last dollar.

He lost! It was only a natural ending against as adept a player as his guest was. But, not believing in his own inferiority, Darrel cursed his luck, draining another glass of wine, and insisted upon another game, with Gaston to name the stakes. Darrel was without a dollar to put up, and he would not borrow. Aready his horse and jewels were gone, and still he must play again. What could he offer to make a bluff of it anyway and win back all that he had lost?

Suddenly Gaston leaned over the table and whispered a few words in the ear of his host.

"You are engaged, they tell me, to Miss Olive Arnold. Is it true?" he hissed.

Young Darrel started a trifle at this, and then bowed his head in reply.

"Well," continued the Frenchman, "to make the game an object I will put up all I have won from you and five hundred dollars in addition if you will put up your claim to the hand of Miss Arnold. If I win you are to yield up all claim whatever you may have upon her. If you win, all you have lost is yours, with five hundred dollars beside. As an object to play for and to make it interesting I do this. You can do as you please, however. Will you do it?"

For a moment Darrel's cheeks flushed with anger and offense, but the fever and passion for play was upon him, and bowing his head, he muttered:

"I agree. Go ahead."

Gaston chose the jack of clubs, while Darrel staked his all on the queen of hearts, and watched with feverish intensity each turn of the cards. The jack won, with the queen following the next turn, almost a winner for young Darrel.

"It was not a fair deal!" he cried in his disappointment and despair. "You cheated, and I know it!"

"It was a straight game from the first," Gaston insisted, and he smiled exultantly into the face of his host.

"You lie!" was all Darrel could gasp in his rage, but scarcely had he uttered the words when Gaston seized his half-filled glass and dashed its contents full in the face of his host.

Some of the cooler-headed ones among the party sprang

between them. For a moment they stood glaring at each other, their eyes flashing and cheeks aflame with rage. Both naturally hot-headed and fired with drink, they insisted upon having immediate satisfaction given. Of course, that meant a duel.

They were to have satisfaction in the good, old-fashioned way of their fathers. The choice of weapons belonged to Gaston, and without a moment's consideration he chose pistols. Then somebody, as a half-drunken joke, suggested that they fight in the dark, each man having one shot, and equally as good a chance as the other. The long dining-room was chosen; the window shutters were closed and securely fastened, and the young men, each having braced himself for the ordeal with a stiff drink of brandy, took their places, one at each end of the long room. The door was closed and locked upon them. The signal agreed upon for the young men to begin was the popping of a champagne cork, in the hall outside. The bottle was opened, and with a loud report the cork flew to the ceiling. While the guests were drinking, just outside, the men inside were straining every nerve and sense of hearing to locate his opponent. For several moments all was still within the dining-room. Then the stealthy steps of one of them could be heard creeping softly about. There came the fall of a chair as one of them stumbled against it with uncertain, staggering step. Next there came the sound of a hurried rush of feet, and a loud report told the eager listeners that one of the men had taken his chance. If he failed or won they knew not, nor could they tell which it was, guest or host. The wine was left forgotten now as they gathered about the door listening with straining ears for the second report. But all was silent inside now. Nothing could be heard but their own suppressed breathing, and the beat of the storm on the windows. Each moment seemed an hour to the listeners. Ten minutes passed, and as the silence at last inside became unbearable, one of them called through the keyhole:

"Go on; what are you waiting for?"

There was no answer. Some one suggested that they go in. Again some one shouted through the keyhole, but there came no answer. A light being produced, they unlocked the door, and holding the lamp high over their heads, they slowly and cautiously entered. A death-like stillness prevailed. The guests peered nervously and anxiously about the room. Among the shadows at the end of the long dining-room table, outstretched on the floor, lay the form of Claude Gaston. He had a smile on his handsome face, and grasped tightly in his hand was his pistol still undischarged. He was alone. Expecting each moment to see the form of Darrel, huddled behind some article of furniture, the guests began to look about for him. Their host had disappeared. The guests, now horrified and sober, stood looking at each other in wonder. Where was Chester Darrel? The windows of the dining-room had all been securely closed and fastened, and the door, the only means of entrance or exit to the room, was locked on the outside. The closest search failed to reveal anything whatever like a trap-door or secret passage. It was only too plain that the shot was fired by young Darrel. The body of the French youth was carried upstairs by the servants, and together the guests made a systematic search of the whole house from attic to cellar, and all through the grounds. But it was all in vain. Not the slightest trace was found of the missing man.

The next day the guests left the old place in the hands of the servants.

The Colonel never cared to return to the old home again, and in the spring his wife passed away. The old man, broken-hearted at the strange, untimely end of his son, lived but a short time after his wife. Then the war broke out and one by one the slaves stole away. The old place was left deserted. Stories were told that the old place was haunted—haunted by the ghost of Chester Darrel, and the young French fellow from Savannah. Every Christmas night, it was said, their ghosts came at midnight, and fought over again the duel in the long dining-room. People about here seemed to believe the stories, and the old house was left more to itself than ever.

Here the old man finished his story, and still shaking his gray head, sat smoking away in silence. I looked at my watch, and was surprised to find that it was after midnight. Thinking that I might catch a few hours' sleep before morning, I got up, and lit the broken furniture I had piled upon the hearth. A bright, cheerful blaze leaped up the huge mouth of the chimney, and filled the low raftered room with smoke. It poured out in clouds, nearly suffocating my companion and myself. The fault seemed with the chimney, which would not draw, thus causing the smoke to issue into the room. Thinking something must be obstructing the draught, I took the cane, which the old negro had used in walking, and thrust it vigorously up the flue. It was as I had expected—there was something up there, and shutting my mouth and eyes to keep out the smoke as best I could, I reached up the whole length of my arm and gave another thrust. I heard something drop, come clattering down the chimney and fall upon the hearth. It rolled across the floor straight toward the negro. He gave one look at the object, and with a wild yell of terror, leaped to his feet, and stood regarding the object with chattering teeth and horrified gaze. As soon as I got some of the soot and smoke out of my nose and eyes, I looked more closely at the thing. On the floor was a grinning skull, its eyeless sockets fixed steadily upon the old negro. Thinking I might find something more up the chimney, I again reached up and poked about. This time I succeeded in dislodging a mass of bones which came rattling down onto the hearth, nearly putting out my fire. To the bones a mass of rotten rags still hung. Several buttons of a peculiar pattern were attached. The old negro regarded them for a moment in surprise. Then, as the truth began to dawn upon his feeble mind, he exclaimed, huskily:

"Marse Chet, sure as I'm alive!"

Fear-stricken after firing his one shot, and fearing his opponent would take his life, Chet had climbed up the wide mouth of the old chimney, and became fast upon the stout iron hooks inside. Chester Darrel must have suffered a miserable death. I gathered up the remains as best I could, and with the help of the old negro, buried them in the garden.

I went back into the old room, sat there smoking, and fell asleep. When I awoke the storm was over; it had stopped raining and the pale Southern moon was stealing out from behind a dark bank of clouds, throwing a bright ray of golden light across the floor and up the side of the old fire-place.

In the morning I mounted my horse to resume my journey, and just before I rode away I gave the old man a handful of loose silver.

THE IRON POT

By J. IRVING ALDEN

THE LEGION OF HONOR had gathered in a grand conclave in New York City. Representatives of the order from all parts of the country were present, among them being some veterans from both the English and American armies in France. After the business of the organization had been transacted, a dinner was given in honor of Bill Edgerton, a leading member of the order.

Among the guests was Colonel Hans Myer, a grizzled veteran of the 269th Regiment. After the substantials had been disposed of, and while the coffee was smoking in the cups, all eyes were fixed upon the guest of the evening, and the cry arose:

"Bill Edgerton! Speech! Speech!"

Bill arose and apologized, saying that he could not make an impromptu speech, but if his comrades were willing, he would tell a story.

"Let's hear the story!" was the shout from all sides of the table.

Peering down through a crack in the floor, we saw three men seated at a table with cards in their hands.

Bill related his story in the following manner:

"It all occurred in the Valley of the Marne. The regiment in which I was a corporal had dug in for the night on the bank of the river. After a meager supper, Jim Radcliff and I lay outside our dug-out, smoking. Twilight was rapidly shutting in the lovely valley, when Jim raised himself on his elbow, and, shading his eyes with his hand, looked off toward No Man's Land across the river. After gazing long and earnestly, he jumped to his feet, went into the dug-out and reappeared with a field-glass. My curiosity was excited as he trained the glass on some object nearly two miles away. While still holding the glass to his eye, he said:

"'Bill Edgerton, there's a deserted French farm-house over there in a grove of trees. The chimney's gone and the window-panes are broken from our bombardment of the Boches; but there's a slim chance of getting some slight relief from our rations. Here, take a look for yourself.'

"I seized the glass and leveled it in the direction indicated.

"'There's one thing you missed in your inventory,' I said, as I handed him back the glass, after catching the glint of a rifle-barrel half a mile behind the house. "The Germans are entrenched behind that hill.'

"'Oh, well, the farmer may have left something good to eat. Besides, we haven't been foraging for a month. Anyhow, I'm willing to risk a bullet for a bite of chicken or a mess of sweet corn. What do you say, shall we slip over there to-night?'

"The mention of gastronomic dainties to which my palate had been a stranger for a month, dispelled what lingering fears I had entertained of the risk involved, and I replied:

"'All right, Jim; we'll go over the top after taps to-night. The night will be dark. The Boches may have left a stray rooster."

It was a warm night in August, and so we suffered no inconvenience as we swam the Marne side by side, with our revolvers in water-tight rubber bags, after crawling the outposts in shell craters on our hands and knees. The way led up-hill over low stone walls, through orchards and across meadows, and it was with a sigh of relief after a toilsome half-hour's work that we drew near to the farmhouse. When within about fifty rods of the house we dropped to our knees and began to crawl. It was now nearly eleven o'clock, and dark as pitch. We crawled along until we reached the house, and made our way quietly to the door. There was no difficulty in opening it, and we tiptoed in, I first and Jim behind. We closed the door. Then Jim struck a match and by its flickering

light we saw that we were in the kitchen. A rude table stood in the middle of the room, flanked by two wooden benches. The fireplace contained a partially consumed log. A general air of desolation and dampness filled the apartment.

"'It looks as though the Prussians had cleaned out all the grub,' said Jim ruefully, as he lit another match and examined the closet. 'Let's look through the cellar.'

"Lifting the trap-door in the floor of the kitchen, we went down a short flight of steps into the cellar; but no pork barrel or potato bin met our sight—nothing but dampness and noisome odors greeted us. When we reached the kitchen again, Jim said:

"'I think we had better get back to camp. There's nothing here. Hold on! There's a ladder leading into the garret. We'll investigate that before we go.'

"The ladder was nailed against the wall. We climbed up in the dark, matches being few, and under a pile of old papers and refuse in a corner we found a big iron kettle filled with what seemed to be ears of corn in the husk. But, to our great delight, the husks, instead of being filled with corn, were bulging with sausage meat. We would have danced for joy had the ceiling been higher. The match which had revealed the treasure went out, but we shook hands in the darkness and slapped each other upon the back in an ecstasy of delight. Visions of fried sausages floated before us, and fragrant odors saluted our palpitating nostrils as we carefully felt our way toward the ladder, Jim carrying the precious pot. We were kneeling over the opening in the floor, and just in the act of descending, when the click of the kitchen door-latch startled us. We listened apprehensively, while upon our strained ear-drums fell the sound of footsteps in the room below. A match scratched upon the wall and the feeble rays of a candle illumined the kitchen, as a hoarse voice said in broken English:

"'Hang your coat over dot vindow, Jake; ve don't vant de English up here after us!'

"Peering down through a crack in the floor we saw three men seated at the table with cards in their hands. They wore German uniforms.

"'Trapped, by thunder!' whispered Jim, putting his mouth close to my ear. 'Shall we take our revolvers and make a rush?'

"'No, no!' I replied. 'Don't get excited. We'll wait and see what they are going to do.'

"When we looked down again one of the men was shuffling a greasy pack of European cards. Looking around at his two comrades, he exclaimed:

"'I don't vas like t'ree-handed poker. I vish dere vas two or t'ree more in der game, even if dey vas Sammees.'

"To my utter surprise and consternation Jim stuck his head through the hole and exclaimed:

"'Say, Dutchy, we'll come down if you'll play a friendly game!'

"The Germans sprang to their feet and reached for their revolvers.

"'Who vas you?" fiercely asked the man who was evidently the leader.

"'Two Americans foraging,' replied Jim.

"'Vell, come down und let's take a look at you.'

"Jim and I climbed down the ladder, Jim carrying the iron pot.

"'Sure dere's no more of you up dere?' said the leader, suspiciously.

"'Yes. We're all here,' replied Jim. 'We'll play fair if you do. We don't want any gun work to-night.'

"'All right, Sammees, come down und take a hand,' said the leader, judging from his faded uniform. 'I used to live in New York, und dot's vhere I learned de game.'

"'I'll tell you what we will do,' said Jim, as we seated ourselves. 'We'll play you a game of poker for anything you've got. We've got a pot of sausage and two plugs of tobacco. What have you got?'

"'Vell, let's see,' said the spokesman, 'dere's the best part of our assets,' placing upon the table a quart canteen of peach brandy, together with a bundle of French notes, the nominal value of which was 10,000 francs. He pulled the cork out of the canteen and an odor sweeter than new-mown hay filled the room. Our mouths watered, for alcohol was scarce in our trenches, and oh be-joyful had not moistened our palates in many weeks. Meanwhile the Germans were looking hungrily at the iron pot.

"'Fritz,' said the leader, turning to one of his men, 'you go outside und stand guard.'

The soldier grumblingly complied, and the game began. Before beginning, however, we cut the two plugs of tobacco into twelve pieces, the conditions being that we should play each piece of tobacco against a drink of brandy.

"That was the most interesting game of poker Jim Radcliffe and I had ever played. We two American men sat on one side of the table, while the bronzed and tattered Germans faced us. Between us, on the table, was a sputtering candle stuck upon a piece of bark. The candle was flanked on either side by a little pile of tobacco and the canteen of brandy, which was industriously pouring out its sweetness into the room, while the iron pot sat somber and rotund in the shadows like a martyr awaiting the sacrifice. There was a strained eagerness of interest in the faces of the men as the cards were dealt and each scanned his hand. We were using dried beans for chips. The first pot was won by the German leader with a straight flush. Each of the Boches helped himself to a piece of tobacco and the game went on disastrously for us. In less than half an hour we had lost all of the tobacco, while the only recompense was a swig apiece from the canteen. My pride had been aroused by our losses, and in my desperation I put up my old silver watch, which was an heirloom in my family, against the 10,000 francs in French notes and the brandy. This, too, was lost. I have regretted the loss of that watch ever since," continued Bill, "not on account of its intrinsic value, but because of the associations connected with it. We then proposed to play the iron pot and its contents against the remainder of the brandy, when the door opened and a harsh voice said in German, which I understand:

"'Hands up, gentlemen!'

"Involuntarily raising our hands, we looked toward the door. The candlelight glinted on six rifle-barrels in the hands of as many Germans, while the lieutenant in command of the squad stepped into the kitchen, and said:

"'What have we here?' picking up the brandy canteen and nearly draining it of its contents. 'And what's this?' he continued, picking a husk from the iron pot. 'Ha, sausages! They'll frizzle merrily, merrily in our mess-pan!' Then turning to us, he said: 'Gentlemen, put your arms on the table; you are my prisoners.'

"'I don't mind losing my revolver,' grumbled Jim, as he laid the weapon upon the table; 'but I object to your interfering with the iron pot. It is contraband of war, and it belongs to us.'

"'Well,' said the lieutenant smilingly, 'you may keep the pot, if you like. But fall in. We must get back to the trenches.'

"The night was of Stygian darkness. A storm was approaching which threw a mantle of blackness over the valley. Jim pinched my arm as we stepped out of the kitchen, which I understood as a signal that we must try to escape. We started to walk over the brow of the hill.

It was so dark that we could not see one foot from our noses. We were walking in files of two, with the lieutenant in front. There were three men behind us. We reached a stone wall when I heard Jim's tense whisper:

"'Now!'

"Jim and I turned suddenly. Jim still carried the pot. We lowered our heads and bowled the three men behind us over. We ran at top speed down the hill, a volley of curses and bullets following us, and, strange to say, the Germans we had been playing cards with ran too, intent upon deserting to escape punishment for playing with us while on duty. We soon lost the Germans in the dark. We did not stop running until we reached our own lines safely, Jim still carrying the iron pot.

"We breakfasted like princes that morning on fried sausage.

"It was not long after that that I was invalided home to New York from a wound that disabled me."

Bill resumed his seat in a tempest of applause, and Colonel Hans Myer arose.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "I am delighted to be associated on this occasion with gentlemen who are my peers in intellect, but scarcely my equal in alcoholic capacity. But I am especially delighted to be with you to-night to listen to Mr. Edgerton's story and to assure you that it is true as Holy Writ. It was my fortune to interrupt that game of poker to taste the peach brandy the speaker has so feelingly alluded to. I remember vividly when the three prisoners escaped with the iron pot. But I am pleased to say that I can restore the watch, which was given to me as my share of the spoils. Here it is."

The colonel drew from his pocket a battered old silver watch.

"For fear that there may be some doubt as to the ownership of the time-piece, I will read the inscription inside the case: 'Presented to Mr. George Edgerton by the congregation of the Port Ewen Reformed Church, for his efficiency in teaching the infant class to sing. As some of you know, I merely joined the Germans before the battle of the Marne as a spy for the French government, and when I ran away I managed to get back to Paris with valuable information for Joffre. Then I returned to New York, where I was born, and regained my old regiment, and I hope soon to be fighting the Boches for Uncle Sam."

In the language of the Bowery, "they didn't do a thing" to the colonel. He was toasted with expensive wines, hailed with shouts, and carried around the room on the shoulders of enthusiastic men. As he shook hands with Edgerton at 2 a. m., he exclaimed:

"It was worth carrying that watch a short time to have the enjoyment of restoring it. The only regret I have is that I didn't have a chance to sample the sausages in the iron pot."

Watch for the story in our next by the famous author, Edgar Fawcett. It is entitled "Norris's Nightcap."

LONG BAFFLED SCIENCE

EUSAPIA PALLADINO, the famous medium whose reputed psychic powers kept European scientists guessing for twenty years or more until her exposure in the United States, died May 18 at her home in Naples. She was sixty years old. In 1915 she predicted that the war would end this coming September and the full particulars of that prophecy are contained in her will, together with the provision that the prophecy be made public on the first anniversary of her death.

After winning the approval of Cesare Lombroso, Sir Oliver Lodge and other European savants of equally good standing, Palladino came to this country in November, 1909, to submit to tests by American psychologists who had become deeply interested in her table movings, spirit rappings, ghost breezes and many other phenomena which she claimed to invoke by supernatural means.

By her friends she was described as more of a psychical acrobat than a clairvoyant or an intellectual medium. How truly acrobatic her perfomances were remained for the late Dr. Hugo Munsterberg of Harvard and Prof. Dickinson Miller of Columbia to prove. At one of the tests Dr. Munsterberg caught Palladino by the heel as she was in the act of adroitly raising a table by means of her foot. Prof. Miller's experience with her was somewhat similar and led him to the conclusion that she accomplished at least half of her marvelous feats by the simple trick known to the prestidigitateur as "the substitution of hands and feet."

Possessed of a wonderfully quick and perceptive mind, Palladino could neither read nor write. She was born of peasant parents in the village of La Pouille, near Naples. When thirteen years old she began taking part in spiritualistic seances with much more success, but they tired her and she left off all such demonstrations until she was twenty-two, when a spiritualist induced her to undergo a systematic course of observation. This was the beginning of her spectacular career, during which she visited Milan, Rome, Geneva, Bordeaux, Paris, Cambridge University, Warsaw and Petrograd.

When she was a year old she had a bad fall, which left a deep dent in her forehead, and from this dent, above which there was a snow-white patch in her dark hair, was supposed to emanate the mysterious breeze which lifted the draperies of the rooms in which she held her seances. It took the sceptical American scientists to discover that this mysterious air current was nothing more or less than a cleverly regulated exhalation of breath from her lips.

When asked by interviewers how she had happened to become a medium, Palladino would invariably place the blame on John King, her mediumistic control, who, she asserted, was in reality the shade of Henry Morgan, the romantic buccaneer of Elizabethan days.

Among the adherents of Palladino was the late Prof. William James of Harvard, who believed that she possessed supernatural knowledge, but she occasionally shrank from the train of psychic effort and resorted to trickery.

Of all the published expositions regarding Palladino's methods, by far the most interesting was from the pen of Dr. Munsterberg.

"When I came to my first seance with Palladino," he said, "I expected to see that disagreeable Italian peasant woman who had so often been described as coarse, ordinary, uneducated and vulgar. Instead I found a lady who must have been extremely beautiful in youth, with a delicate humor around her eyes, with an expression of sympathy and almost of brilliance in her face, with a vivacity and cleverness which would have attracted me in almost any parlor. This impression grew and it was emphasized by seeing how much she evidently suffered from the efforts of the seances."

A GAME

By JULIAN HAWTHORNE

IN spite of the epidemic, the house-party went on. Some people must die, but those whose time is not yet must amuse themselves. Among the guests were Miss Galatea Alma, a girl without fortune but endowed with beauty and innocence; young Captain Sabremore, who was paying her attentions—whether serious or not, all but Galatea herself doubted—and an elderly, rough-looking gentleman named Spiridion, a great traveler, with the courtesy title of "professor." He had lately returned from Africa.

He seemed to be a good-hearted old fellow. He was a little mysterious in his unpolished way, and some persons found an agreeable magnetism in his intercourse. Galatea and her captain were not greatly put out, therefore, when he strolled up to them one evening as they were sitting on the veranda, and the captain was writing his name on Galatea's fan.

He stood before them with his hands in his pockets, his beard bristling out like an African jungle, and his bushy brows bent down over his big, round eyes.

"Are you fond of diamonds?" he asked, addressing himself to the girl in his abrupt style.

"Yes, indeed; not that I ever had much chance to make their personal acquaintance," she added, with her ingenuous smile.

Professor Spiridion sat down and drew up a rustic table that was at hand. He pulled out of his pocket three big diamonds and slapped them down on the table.

"Let me introduce you to these!" he said. "I call them Youth, Beauty and Virtue. The biggest one is Virtue."

The captain put on his monocle and bent over them.

"My soul, professor!" ejaculated he. "The least of 'em is worth a fortune! All perfect stones, and of the first water. Get 'em in Africa?"

The professor nodded. "What do you think of them, Miss Galatea?" he demanded.

"They are worthy of their names," she replied. "I never saw anything so magnificent."

In truth it would have been difficult to exaggerate their splendor. "Virtue" was as large as an acorn, and the others were but little smaller. They were pure white, without flaw, and of symmetrical form. As they lay there in the light of the sunset they seemed alive; they flashed like stars, and sent out a rainbow radiance. Sabremore twisted his mustache. Galatea caught her breath in a girlish sigh. "How did they become yours?" she asked.

He shook the dice in his hands, and let them fall on the table. The other two bent eagerly forward to learn the result.

"I call them mine, but in fact they're not. They're nobody's," answered Spiridion. "They belonged to a friend of mine, who died of fever in the bush, leaving no will, and no relatives that I've ever come across. I'll tell you what I'll do, young lady. I'll toss you for them."

"Toss me for them!" she repeated, glancing up with her brows at the angle of perplexity.

"Throw the dice, you know," rejoined the other. "The captain has three in his pocket, I'll wager!"

"Youth, Beauty and Virtue!" murmured Sabremore; "Miss Galatea has the three realities already; she ought to have their representatives into the bargain."

"But how can we play?" asked she. "What can I set against the professor's stake?"

"Set your realities, as the captain calls them, against my representatives," he returned. "I need youth, beauty and virtue quite as much as you need these pebbles. Is it a go?"

"You're making fun of me," said she with a nervous laugh. "I might win your diamonds, but how could you win——" She stopped and blushed.

"That's my affair," said he, nodding his big head. "All you have to do is to throw the dice. Hand them out, captain."

The captain did, in fact, produce three cubes from his waistcoat-pocket. At the same time he whispered something in Galatea's pretty ear.

"That's right!" said Spiridion with a gruff chuckle. "When Fortune says, 'Come!' don't stop to ask questions.

Still, if you have any moral objections to gambling, of course I——" He began to gather up the stones. Captain Sabremore made an involuntary movement and muttered something beneath his mustache. He almost frowned at the girl.

"Oh, no; I——" she began. The professor paused, with Virtue between his thumb and forefinger. "Let us try, just for fun," added she breathlessly. "I know I shall lose."

"Which shall we throw for first?" asked Spiridion.

"Oh, for the big one!" said she.

"For Virtue be it!" he rejoined. "I'll take the first toss."

He shook the dice in his large hands and let them fall on the table. He then leaned back in his chair without looking at them; but the other two bent eagerly forward to learn the result. The captain whistled.

"A five and two sixes," he said. "There's only one throw can beat it, Miss Galatea."

She took the dice between her delicate palms. Her cheeks were red and her eyes bright.

"The diamond is mine!" she exclaimed defiantly, and threw. But then her courage failed her, and she covered her eyes with her hands. Spiridion still retained his indifferent posture; but the captain, after a glance through his monocle, came as near shouting as the laws of polite breeding permit.

"Three sixes! She's won!" was what he said.

"Won and lost," remarked the professor coolly. "Virtue is a gamble, anyway. My congratulations, miss; and if you please, we'll postpone the next bout till to-morrow. My luck may change. If I can't be virtuous, I might be content with youth and beauty." So saying, he picked up the remaining stones, bowed grotesquely to the lovers, and withdrew.

Meanwhile Galatea sat with the great diamond pressed against her bosom, and a strange expression in her eyes.

"What did he mean by 'lost'?" asked she in a voice barely audible.

The captain, who had returned the dice to his pocket, stooped forward and for an answer kissed her.

Next morning the lovers went out rowing on the lake. Returning through the wood after leaving the boat, they came to a forest glade, lonely and beautiful. The broad bole of a fallen tree, cushioned with green moss, lay prone amidst the wild flowers.

"Capital lounge," remarked Sabremore. "Let's sit down."

They advanced slowly, absorbed in each other, his arm around her waist, her face bent down as she listened to his murmured words. She had made a little net for the diamond, and hung it by a cord around her neck. A nervous movement of her hand broke the cord, and the diamond fell. She uttered a cry:

"My diamond!"

"Permit me to restore Virtue to its owner!" said the gruff voice of the professor. He seemed to have started up out of the ground; but there he stood, bowing, with the great stone gleaming in his hand. "That's the trouble with such things—they're so easily lost," he observed, grinning through his beard at her agitation. "Come, let's play for the next! Which shall it be—Youth or Beauty?"

"I won't risk my beauty yet," said the girl. "Let it be youth."

"That suits me," said Spiridion. He took the glorious crystal from his pocket; it sparkled with immortality. He clapped the other hand down on that which held the stone, then separated them. the fists closed.

"Guess in which it is," said he.

Galatea hesitated, her hands clasped over her heart. Sabremore made a secret sign, unseen by the professor.

"In the left," whispered Galatea.

He opened his hairy fist, and there, sure enough, lay the stone. She caught it up eagerly. The two men laughed—Sabremore with a characteristic subdued grace, Spiridion with his usual heavy chuckle.

"Luck is still against me," he said; "but I look for a change to-morrow. Till then, my virtuous young friends, adieu!" He stood up, and with an obeisance that smacked as much of mockery as of courtesy, stepped behind an elder-bush and disappeared.

"I stood by you that time," remarked the captain, putting his hands on her shoulders and looking into her eyes.

Galatea, strange to say, burst into tears.

"Excuse my intrusion," said the burly professor, opening the door. "I'm something of a doctor. Let me see her."

The room was dusky. Galatea lay in the bed. Though little more than twenty-four hours had passed, there was a change in her as great as so many years might have caused. She was still beautiful—perhaps even more so than before—but her movements and demeanor were those of a feeble old woman. The epidemic had visited her and she was very low. Sabremore leaned against the footboard of the bed with one hand in his pocket, the other moodily twisting his watch-chain.

Galatea's dark eyes opened; she recognized Spiridion.

"You played me false," she said. "I lost, not won!"

"Nonsense, young lady," he returned. "Don't you see, even in this dim light the stones shine on your bosom? As for the rest, blame the captain; the lake and the wood are not safe places for delicate ladies. But come, there's no time to be lost. Here are two little boxes; one contains a medicine that will cure you, the other Beauty. Make your selection."

"I must win—he would not love me if I lost," she said with a slight shudder. "Life without beauty would be death!" She lifted herself up with a sudden, passionate movement, closed her eyes, and snatched at one of the boxes. Its weight told her that she had got the gem. She fell back with a hysteric little laugh. "I can die now!" she said faintly, while her darkening gaze sought her lover. "You won't refuse to look on my face in the coffin?"

"Youth, Beauty and Virtue—all yours—and you talk of coffins!" exclaimed the professor. "A touch of delirium."

"I know you now," said the girl, with a strange look.

At that moment a singular alteration began. The disease, hitherto confined within her body, showed itself upon her features. They became drawn and ghastly, and hideous blotches made their appearance. In a few minutes her beauty was gone, and only repulsiveness remained. The professor took a hand mirror from the table and held it up before her.

"You devil!" exclaimed Sabremore, striking it from his grasp. "Can't you let her alone?"

"I have certain duties to perform," replied the other coolly.

The captain had not been quick enough; she had seen. With a moan of horror, her spirit passed. Sabremore, averting his eyes, drew the sheet over her blasted face.

"The diamonds come to me," he said after a pause.

"You're welcome to them; they're bogus, as we are," returned Spiridion with a sneer. "But she," he added in a different tone, as he turned to leave the room, "was a woman!"

Don't miss the story, "Chips in Her Purse," by Marie Dressler, to appear in our next issue.

PEGGY'S HERO

By KATHERINE DANGERFIELD

TIM was jest a-going t' help himself t' more sugar, when, happenin' t' think, he looks up, all smiles, 'n' sez:

"An' so ye've rented the shop?"

"Yes," sez I. "An' right glad I am of that!"

"Who'd ye rent it to?" sez Tim.

"A tinker named Jarvis," sez I.

"'N' what sort is he?" sez Tim.

"Pretty fair—takin' his own word fer it."

"Married?" sez Tim.

"No," sez I, "he ain't. He's all alone in the world—barrin' his mother—an' she's eighty."

"Eighty!" sez Tim. "An' how old is Jarvis?"

"Fifty," sez I. "Though he don't look it."

"An' the tales he was tellin'?" sez Tim. "What's thim?"

"Oh, nothin'," sez I. "Only his mother bein' too old t' set the house t' rights, he does it himself."

"Oh!" sez Tim. "He's what ye call a molly—ain't he?"

"Sh!" sez I. "Ye mus'n't make fun o' good deeds, 'cause no luck comes of it."

"Who's making fun?" sez Tim. "I was only wonderin' why he didn't git married an' let his wife tend the house."

"Well, Timmie," sez I, "I asked him that same, an' sez he: 'Ye see, Miss Peggy, it's this way. Mother's gettin' pretty well on in life, an' so is jest a bit inclined to be vexed when there ain't much t' be vexed about, an' so I've always been afraid that if I took a wife, her 'n' mother wouldn't pull together very well. Another thing,' sez he, 'mother spent the best days of her life dancin' a'tendence on me, an' it's but fair that I do the same by her, now that she's seein' the worst of 'em.' Them's his words, Timmie," sez I. "An' right noble I thought' em, too."

"So that's why he don't git married!" sez Tim. "Well, if he ain't a corker, there never was one!"

Tim stirred his tea fer a while, then, lookin' up all of a sudden, he sez:

"Say, Peggy, why don't you git married?"

"Married!" sez I. "An' what in the name o' fortune wud I do wid a man, supposin' I was fool enough t' take one?"

"Do wid him!" sez Tim. "Why, kiss'm; an' hug'm; an' pet'm up—same's all wimin do, o' course."

"An' nice job that'd be!" sez I. "No, sir, Timmie; 'tain't likely, after spendin' forty years in peace an' quietness, I'm going t' turn fool, an' kiss an' hug an' ol' rogue what smells o' rum, an' has a score o' wimin!"

"Peggy," sez Tim, thoughtful like, "has all men got a score o' wimin?"

"O' course!" sez I.

"How d'ye know?" sez Tim.

"Know!" sez I. "Why, they're all rogues—every mother's son of 'm!"

Timmie helped himself t' more bread, an' while smearin' it, he stammered:

"Say, Peggie, will—will I be a—a rogue an'—an' have a score o'—o' wimin, when I git big?"

"The Lord forbid!" sez I.

"Well, then, if I don't," sez Tim, "will—will ye marry me, Peggy?"

"Arrah, hear 'm!" sez I. "It's takin' leave of his senses, he is! Go 'long wid ye! Marry you—an' ye only ten years old!"

"I won't g'long, an' I ain't takin' leave of my senses, either," sez Tim. "I only love ye, Peggy," sez he, "an' I hate t' see ye alone in the world."

"Alone in the world! Ah, Timmie, that I am," sez I, "an' barrin' yerself, there's none t' close my eyes in death if the Lord saw fit t' call me. Alone in the world! But 'tain't that I'm cold an' want it that way, Timmie, 'cause bein' a woman, I'd like t' have a man o' me own, an' a babe t' call me 'mother,' but it's that I hates the divils o' men that's going. Ye know, Timmie," sez I, "when a woman's clean—same as meself—(I'm not boastin'), she sort o' hates to tie herself t' an ol' fool what drinks an' drinks till he falls down like a log, an' 'tween-times chews 'baccy like a goat at an old shoe—not t' speak of his swearin' like a trooper at all times. Worse nor a pig, Timmie, 'cause a pig won't abuse the few wits that natur' blessed him with."

"Well," sez Tim, "seein' ye won't marry me, what sort will ye marry?"

Thinking it all a joke, I patted him on the head, an' sez I:

"Timmie, if ye ever meet a man what can take a glass an' leave a glass, a man that's good t' his mother, a man that won't abuse the dumb beasts, an' above all, a man what ain't ashamed t' go on his two knees an' say his prayers—if ye ever meet that man, bring him here an' I'll marry him 'fore he has a chance t' ask me."

"All right," sez Tim, "I won't fergit."

So saying, an' tea bein' over, away goes Tim t' join the boys at play. Dear, good Timmie! As fine a boy as ever stepped, even though he be, as the neighbors say, "a child of chance." 'Tain't his fault, poor child, an' I've me doubts about its bein' his mother's. I always said that men were rogues, an' rogues they'll be till the crack o' doom.

Well, sir, it's jest six months this very day since Tim up an' asked me why I didn't git married; six months this very day since I rented the shop to Jarvis; an' to-day—this very mornin'—Jarvis an' me was married. An' it was all Tim's doin's—every bit of it. I'll tell ye how it all happened:

Ye see, the shop bein' right nex' door, an' Jarvis an' meself bein' of a social nature, we always stopped to pass the time o' day when he came to open up in the mornin', an' likewise 'fore he went home at night. Well, wid the comin' an' goin', an' the chattin' now an' then, two months had slipped away, when one mornin' jest as I was goin' t' git me tea, lo an' behold ye, the nose o' the kittle dropped off! Comin' on tea time in the evenin', I calls Tim, an' sez I:

"Timmie, take this kittle in to Jarvis, an' tell 'im t' sodder the nose of it on." Away goes Tim, an' I bustles

about, settin' the table. Twenty minutes later, hearin' a rap, I calls: "Come in!" an' the door opens an' in comes —who d'ye think?—Jarvis himself, kittle an' all.

"Miss Peggy," sez he, "I've made bold t' bring the kittle home meself; also, Miss Peggy, I've brought a jam tart, an' I'm hopin' ye'll accept the same an' not be offended." "An' what would I offended at, Jarvis?" sez I. "Surely not at the good will ye're showin'." "Oh, thank ye, Miss Peggy," sez he. "I'm glad to hear ye say so!" "Well, then, if ye are, an' seein' ye're here, perhaps ye'll stay to tea?"

"Stay!" sez he. "Oh, Miss Peggy, d'ye mean it?" "O' course!" sez I. "An' while the kittle's a-boilin', do you run an' fetch the dear old mother—there's a lad!" By 'n by back comes Jarvis, leading his mother, an' smilin' all over. Bein' pretty busy 'round the stove, I didn't take much notice, an' so was quite taken back, on goin' t' pour me tea, t' find a great, red rose in me cup.

"What's this?" sez I. "Sh!" sez Jarvis. "It's a rose, Miss Peggy—I put it there—but I'd rather mother wouldn't know, 'cause she's always been set 'gainst foolishness 'twixt boys an' girls."

After that, Jarvis often dropped in of an evenin', an' alwa's leadin' the good, old mother by the hand, an' somehow I was alwa's glad t' see them—'specially Jarvis himself.

Well, an' so the time went on till a week ago this mornin', when Tim came tearin' in like mad, an' throwin' his arms about me neck, screamed out:

"Peggy! Peggy! I've found him!"

"Found who?" sez I.

"Why, him—the man ye sent me t' hunt fer, o' course."

"I don't understand ye, Timmie," sez I.

"Ye do," sez Timmie. "Ye told me t' go an' find a man what sez his prayers, an' don't drink, an' 's good t' dumb beasts, an' I've been huntin' him ever since. What's more, I've found 'm, too. What's more again, I tol' 'm that I'd been lookin' fer him, an' that you said ye'd marry him 'fore he had a chance t' ask ye. Yes, I did! An' who d'ye think it is, Peggy? Why, it's Jarvis!"

"Oh, Timmie!" sez I.

"Now, don't be Ohin'," sez Tim, "but let me tell ye all about it. This mornin' I went in t' see Jarvis, an' I found 'im doing—what d'ye think? Nursin' a whole basket o' kittens, an' singin' 'Rock o' Ages' at the top of his voice. 'Them your kittens, Jarvis?' sez I. 'No,' sez he. 'They're the cat's.' 'Your cats?' sez I. 'No,' sez he. 'A stray cat's. She clawed at the door las' night, an' when I opened it in she came, a kitten in her mouth. I made her a bed in the corner, an' out she went again, an' never stopped 'til she brought in the whole six of 'em. 'D'ye get drunk, Jarvis?' sez I. 'No,' sez he. 'Why not?' sez I. 'Well, first an' fo'most, 'cause I don't favor the taste of it. Second, 'cause there's mother t' consult, an' she don't like anything o' that sort.' 'One thing more, Jarvis,' sez I. 'Have you a score o' wimin?' 'A score o' what?' sez he. 'Wimin,' sez I. 'G'long,' sez he. 'Where would I get 'em?' 'Well, Jarvis,' sez I, 'ye say yer prayers—I heard ye. Yer good t' dumb beasts—I saw ye. Ye don't git drunk, an' ye ain't got a score o' wimin, therefore, ye're the man I've been lookin' fer. Jarvis, Peggy ain't cold, an' she wants a man of her own, an' a child t' call her mother, an' she sez she'll marry ye 'fore ye have a chance t' ask her.' That's what I said to 'im, Peggy," sez Tim, "an' I said it up plump an' straight."

"Oh, Timmie, Timmie!" sez I. "An' what did Jarvis say?"

"Nothing," sez Tim. "He only dropped the kittle he was mendin', an' ran t' the sink an' started to scrub his face an' hands. Then—why, here's Jarvis himself—let him tell ye."

True enough. Right in the doorway, cap in hand, stood Jarvis, smiling an' blushin' all over.

"Dear Miss Peggy," sez he, "I can't find words t' thank ye! I'd a never picked up spunk enough t' do it myself, but when Tim came over, an' tol' me how ye said ye'd marry me in spite o' meself, my courage rose up, an' here I am. If I don't tell it t' ye right, Miss Peggy, it's only 'cause the words is wantin'—not the heart. An' believe me, Miss Peggy," sez Jarvis, "I love ye with all me heart! An' if ye hadn't been so kind as t' send that message by Tim, I'd have pined away in grief, 'cause I'd 'a' never had spunk t 'ask ye meself."

Well, while Jarvis was a talkin' me eyes kep' a fillin', an' the end of it was that Jarvis an' me settled the whole thing, then an' there! An' this mornin' we was married. I put the turkey in the oven 'fore we started for the church, an' left Tim t' tend an' baste it—an' he done it to a queen's taste, God bless 'im!

Comin' home we all sat down as happy as larks. First of all, there was the dear old mother, wrapped in heavy shawls, an' givin' us her blessin'. Next was Jarvis, laughin' an' talkin' all at once; helpin' his mother an' helpin' me; caressin' his mother's dear, gray head, an' kissin' meself whenever his mother wasn't lookin', an' blushin' like a rose the whole time. Next came meself, happy as the flowers o' May, an' strivin' like a Turk t' keep the tears back. Last of all came Tim—lovin' and well-loved Tim—the blessed cause of it all. Fer a while Tim sat sly as a mouse, then seein' Jarvis givin' meself a kiss, an' seein' me return the same, he looks up, all mischief, an' sez he:

" 'Tain't likely, after spendin' forty years in peace an' quietness, I'm goin' t' turn fool an' kiss an' hug an ol' rogue what smells o' rum an' has a score o' wimin!"

"G'long!" sez I, all smiles an' blushes. "Ye're as sly as any ol' fox."

"Timmie," sez Jarvis, "after eatin' we'll both pitch in an' help Peggy with the dishes, then Peggy an' me's goin' t' town, while you mind mother, an' we're goin' t' make out a paper, sayin' that in case anythings happen t' us, everything we own is t' be given t' Timmie, known from this day forth as own son t' Jim Jarvis an' his dear wife, Peggy."

Tim looked as if he was goin' t' choke, then huggin' me tight, he whispers:

"Peggy, is Jarvis a rogue?"

"No," sez I, "he ain't. He's a hero!"

MAY DAY FESTIVAL OF THE ROMANS

THE observance of the first day of May as a spring festival goes back to ancient Rome, where the Floralia, or floral games, began on April 28 and continued through several days. Among the ancient peoples of Ireland, the Scottish Highlands and the Isle of Man, the first of May was the date of a feast called Beltein, and the principal observance was the lighting of bonfires on the summits of hills. In England the floral feast of the ancient Romans was perpetuated and the same was true of France. In the former country the dancing about the Maypole and the crowning of the fairest maiden in each village as "Queen of the May" made the May Day festival very popular with the children and young people. These customs are followed in America to a large degree, especially in the East.

THE RENEGADE DETECTIVE

A Serial Story

By RANDOLPH BADGER

CHAPTER NINE

THE FIGHT ON THE RIVER

DELANO JOSLIN was an inimitable actor, and with proper cultivation might have made his fortune before the footlights. In the double part which he had to play, it must be confessed that he did his villainy justice, for not only throughout the whole farce was he true to his own nature, but he played the rôle of dutiful son, dignified magistrate and quiet gentleman to perfection. He was prolific of Indian stories of his campaigns and adventures, and delighted his father with recitals of his sea voyages. So minutely had he gained details of all of Harry Fulton's former life, actions, manners and habits that he might have deceived a more acute and penetrating person than old Dan. Gaffer Grimes had told him of the escape of the two prisoners and the recapture of Ralph Desmond, and although Joslin felt some apprehension about Jigger, it soon disappeared when he remembered that Jigger was in his power for helping Ralph to escape from Sing Sing, unconscionably as he had done it. Therefore he troubled himself no further about Jigger and Sammy, whom he considered himself well rid of, and easily, too.

About two weeks after their escape, as Joslin sat in an easy-chair in his own apartment, smoking a cigar and reading a sporting journal, a servant brought up a card on a tray, bearing Rackstraw's name, and upon being told to usher the gentleman up, the girl departed, and a few minutes later John entered the room with his hat in his hand, closed and locked the door after him, drew a chair close to Joslin's, and then said:

"Hello!"

"Well, my red-nosed bully, what do you want?" asked Joslin coldly.

"Didn't you make an appointment with me for me to-night?"

"Oh, yes; so I did, so I did. Take a cigar."

"Certainly," said Rackstraw, selecting one from the box. "Got any liquor?"

"Never without it. There's cognac brandy in that decanter; help yourself."

"This is the right sort," said the constable complacently, as he emptied his glass several times and took care to keep it filled again.

"How do you feel—primed for business?"

"Of course. What's your lay?"

"Money, as usual."

"What's the matter? Can't you grind it out of the old man fast enough?"

"No; it's really too bad to observe how persistently he lives."

"We all love life."

"You! Oh, well, you only speak for yourself. Old Dan is selfish."

"How's that?"

"Well, just see how he is keeping me waiting in expectation."

"How old is he?"

"Eighty."

"Strong?"

"Healthy as a young bull."

"All sailors are, as a rule. No danger of any sudden sickness, is there?"

"I am afraid not."

"Too bad he hain't got the heart-disease."

"I wish I could give it to him."

"That's easily done."

"Oh, but, my dear Johnny, your insinuation is odious!"

"Bosh! You've done it before!"

"Here, here! You are coming it entirely too strong, Johnny."

"I ain't knowed you these ten years for nuthin'."

"Presumably not, Johnny."

"And if I ain't mistaken, you want me to-night about that very thing."

"Suppose I should admit the truth of your surmise?"

"You know I'm with you, through thick and thin."

"What can you do for me?"

"Nothing but help out your own ingenious ideas."

"Well," said Joslin, "you know what I want?"

"Old Dan's money."

"And to get it it is necessary for him to die."

"Do you intend to hurry him along?"

"No."

"What, then, is your design?"

"My good fellow, to precipitate death arouses suspicions diabolical."

"Then you want to kill him by inches?"

"Not 'kill,' Johnny. He is already beginning to cave in."

"Under your superintendence?"

"No; I simply baited the trap."

"Ah! you are working him?"

"He is working himself."

"How are you doing it?"

"Why, his constitution is becoming undermined."

"By medicine?"

"Yes; in a month more he will be a total wreck."

"That does not suit you exactly, I plainly see."

"To tell the truth, it doesn't."

"What is your plan?"

"I must raise some money."

"Are you getting hard pressed?"

"Fearfully. All the money is gone which I got from old Desmond's safe."

"Fifty thousand! What did you do with it?"

"Gambled it away."

"Not around here?"

"No; I take nocturnal trips to the city."

"Ah! And have contracted debts?"

"You have hit it, old son. My luck has been perfectly appalling of late."

"Can't you squeeze the old man?"

"No; he is as closefisted as a miser."

"What do you want of me?"

"I've got a check in my pocket which I want you to raise."

"What's the amount?"

"Five thousand dollars."

"And how much do you want to make it?"

"Fifty."

"Got any acid?"

"There is a bottle on that desk beside the ink bottle."

"Why don't you do the job yourself?"

"Because I may get in trouble."

"How so?"

"Well, Thorn has had his eye upon me ever since I fastened that other job on Ralph Desmond. I have this check made out to bearer, and mean to pay an honest debt to you. With a receipt for it, which I can show my worthy father, under the name of John Brown, I will be clear. You tack forty-five thousand dollars on the check, get it, and half of the money is yours. How does that suit you?"

"I will do it. Give me the check."

Joslin drew it from his pocket and handed it to his confederate, who sat down at the desk, and after five minutes' careful work, so skilfully changed the denomination from five to fifty thousand that the keenest perception could hardly note the difference."

"What do you think of this?" he asked, returning to Joslin and showing it.

"Exquisite! The work could not be done better."

"Will I draw it to-morrow?"

"Don't be foolish. Do you want to get nipped?"

"How?"

"By the payingteller on the large amount."

"What will I do?"

"Have it certified, deposit in another bank, and draw against it the same day. You can easily change your appearance. When you have got the dust, return to me with the twenty-five."

"It shall be done to-morrow."

"Good! And in the meantime I will keep doctoring the old man."

"Look out! Thorn suspects foul play, and is watching you."

"Don't you fret. When he catches me napping he can have me."

"How was that case of Desmond's worked?"

"Very easily and very nicely."

"Let me have the details."

"I filled him with wine and sent him into the bank with the forged check in his pocket. He didn't know that I placed it there any more than his wife knew, on another occasion, that I picked her pocket when she was standing in the garden talking to Arthur Desmond, and gained possession of the duplicate safe-key, with which I opened his safe."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Rackstraw hilariously. "You're a cute one."

"Yes, very," muttered James Thorn in the chimney, where he was concealed.

"Would you like to see how my father is killing himself?" asked Joslin, with a sardonic grin of pleasure upon his face.

"Yes; it must be worthy of its projector," replied the constable.

"You see," said the other, rising, "he sleeps in the room adjoining this one."

"Well?"

"You will observe that there is a door of communication between."

"I see it, under those curtains on the wall."

"That door gives me ingress into his room whenever I care to go in."

"I do not see how——"

"Wait. You will understand in a moment. You will now perceive this small gas-stove with the tube apparently joined to the gas-pipe."

"It is joined to the gas-pipe on the side wall."

"There is where you are mistaken, like every one else who sees it."

"What, then, is that pipe, if not a gas-pipe?"

"It really is a gas-pipe, but there is no gas in it."

"Oh!"

"The pipe goes up into the ceiling—do you see?"

"Yes."

"Well, it runs over the rafters, and down into my father's room."

"But where do you get the gas from to light the stove?"

"No gas is used; I employ lamps instead," replied Joslin.

"Then what is that rubber pipe for?"

"To expel the gas which I generate in the stove with chemicals every night."

"Ah! I understand. And it is poisonous?"

"There is a subtle demon in it which, if breathed in sufficient quantities, will so weaken the human system that in time the victim will appear to have suddenly become aged, and in the end—die."

"Cannot evidence of it be traced by examination?" asked Rackstraw.

"It leaves no signs behind."

"How long have you been using it?"

"About one week," replied Joslin.

"And how long will it take to act its worst?"

"Four weeks more."

"Why don't you wait with this check until that time, then?"

"Because I am in need of the money, and can't!"

"It is a risky business," said Rackstraw thoughtfully.

"Not half as bad as stabbing a man or shooting him, as you have done for smaller stakes than I am playing for," replied Joslin coolly.

At this moment there sounded a terrific noise in the fireplace.

Thorn had been shadowing Joslin pretty closely of late, and gaining ingress into the house unperceived, he had reached the roof, and went down the chimney leading into Joslin's room. Hearing Rackstraw come in just at that moment, his descent down the chimney was arrested, and he listened to all they said. He had braced himself up over the open fireplace by pressing against the sides with his arms and legs. The air was stifling, the soot and dust were inhaled in his lungs and up his nostrils, and he was suddenly overcome with faintness, and fell, bringing down a dense cloud with him that rushed out and filled the room.

"Good heavens! what is that?" exclaimed Joslin.

"A man!" yelled the other in affright, as he rushed for the door.

Thorn was unrecognizable, covered as he was from head to foot with dirt; but Joslin knew in a moment that his conversation had been overheard, and the worst fears assailed him.

"I cannot let that fellow escape me if I have to kill

him!" he muttered, as he glared at his strange caller. "He has evidently overheard all we said, and if he once escapes me all my plans will fall through."

Thorn was weakened, and the quick eyes of the other saw it.

Picking up a heavy oaken chair, he rushed at the detective with it lifted up over his head, and down it came with annihilating force.

With a deep groan the detective fell to the floor, nearly killed.

At the same moment Rackstraw poked his scared face in the doorway.

"Come in here!" exclaimed Joslin, kneeling down over his victim.

"Who is it?" asked the other in wavering tones, as he slowly entered.

Joslin turned the detective over on his back, and uttered a cry of fear.

"James Thorn!" he exclaimed.

"Good heavens, we are lost!" groaned Rackstraw in a cold sweat.

"Not yet," said the other fiercely, as he drew his revolver and pointed it at the unconscious man's head. "Shall I finish him?"

"No, no!" cried the other frantically, rushing up to Joslin and holding his arm.

"What then shall we do with him?"

"Put him in one of Gaffer's dungeons."

"He may escape like the others did."

"Impossible. The dungeons are underground."

"Is there any way to get out except by the one door?"

"No; besides, Gaffer has had some experience, and will guard him closely."

"But when he must be released—what then?"

"We can keep him there until he is dead, and no one will be the wiser."

"Very well. Bind and gag him if he yet lives."

"Oh, he is alive," said Rackstraw, doing as he was commanded.

"How will we convey him? In the boat?"

"That is the only way. No one will be on the river as late as this."

"Can you carry him?"

"Easily."

"Then come on. If any one interferes with us, woe betide them!"

They left the room together, carrying the unconscious form of Thorn, got out of the house unperceived, and, getting in a rowboat at the foot of the garden, they pulled out on the stream. In fifteen minutes they were within a short distance of the prison, when a skiff suddenly put out from some bushes on the shore, containing two people, and came skimming toward them.

"By heavens, they are coming this way!" exclaimed Joslin.

"What shall we do—run for it?"

"That is the best way; if they get too near—fight."

"All right. Put your muscle to the oars now!"

Exerting all their strength, they went on; the pursuing boat gained on them.

"It's no use," said Joslin at last. "They mean fight."

"Ha! Don't you recognize them?"

"Yes; it is that infernal Jigger and the boy!"

"Draw in your oars."

"Ahoy there, haul to!" cried Simon just then.

"Keep on rowing," said Joslin. "I'll attend to them!"

His pistol was out, and there was a dangerous look on his face as he watched Simon and Sammy approaching.

At this moment Thorn, in the bottom of the boat, regained his senses.

It did not take the keen-witted detective long to realize what happened.

He tried to burst his bonds, but signally failed.

"Lie still," growled Rackstraw, "or we'll throw you overboard!"

"Are you going to haul to?" sang out Simon threateningly.

"Go to——" commenced Joslin, when bang! went Jigger's pistol.

"Ouch!" cried Rackstraw. "By heavens, that was close. My hat's gone!"

"It looks as if they meant fight," said Joslin.

"Belay there!" continued Jigger. "You see we will have no fooling."

"Curse you! Come on, then!" cried Joslin.

He rested upon his oars, and Simon pulled his boat nearer the other.

"Help, help, Jigger!" cried Thorn.

"Aye," came the cheery reply. "We are coming, Thorn!"

At this moment the boats had almost touched gunwales, when Joslin and Rackstraw sprang up with their oars and attacked Jigger, who, with Sammy, had similarly armed himself.

The boats rocked violently, and there were some severe blows exchanged that started the blood flowing copiously. Such a fight as this could not last long, for the boats soon drifted apart. Seeing this, Rackstraw suddenly dropped his oar, grasped the huge bag of iron fastened to a rope lying in the bottom of the boat, which was used to anchor the skiffs with, and raising it aloft, he sent it crashing into Jigger's boat.

There was a grinding sound as the heavy iron splintered the hull and stove a huge hole in the bottom; then the water poured in, filling the skiff, and a moment later it filled and sunk like a shot, leaving its two occupants floating in the water. The two rascals uttered shouts of joy, and paddling their boat toward the man and the boy they struck savagely at them with their heavy ash oars. Down went the swimmers, however, before they were injured, and the impetus of the blows threw the two rascals into the water out of the violently rocking boat. Simon and Sammy came up to the surface again like two beavers, and seeing their enemies placed at as much disadvantage as themselves, they swam to the boat and got in before the others could prevent it. There was one oar left, and Sammy grasped it and began sculling the boat toward the shore. They had not proceeded far, however, when Joslin reached the stern and grasped the oar, clinging to it tenaciously. Rackstraw meantime had gone to the bow, and with his large pocket-knife he began to cut a hole in the bottom of the boat. Simon sprang toward him, but was too late to prevent the catastrophe. Having accomplished his design, the constable swam to the shore, leaving Sammy battling with Joslin for possession of the oar. The boat was drifting in toward the sloping bank by this time, and to prevent it sinking, Simon was obliged to hold his hand over the hole, as the water had been pouring in. Joslin was pushing the boat shoreward at every stroke, and before Jigger or the boy knew it the boat was beached. Rackstraw had secured one of the oars, and just then Joslin got the other from Sammy. The two men attacked Thorn's rescuers, and as they were unarmed and fast in the boat, the two rascals quickly knocked them over with the oars and left them on the shore bleeding and senseless. Then, taking the bound form of Thorn between them, they hurried away to the prison, and, confining the detective in a subterranean dungeon, they returned to secure Jigger and Slinking Sammy; but when they got back the two had disappeared.

(To be continued)

CURRENT NEWS

DROP GERMAN FOR ENGLISH

After working for forty-six years in the German language, Mozart Lodge No. 121, Free and Accepted Masons, of Camden, N. J., is to conduct all its business in the English language, in accordance with a ruling of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey.

EARTH SWALLOWS WOMAN

Returning from a shopping tour at McAdoo, Mrs. John Cheslock, of Yorktown, Pa., was nearly suffocated when she took a short-cut across the Lehigh Valley Coal Company lands and was caught in a mine cave and swallowed up to her neck. Her screams for help attracted the attention of men, who rescued her with difficulty.

PAPER CUPS FOR PLANT POTS

A drugstore in Nashville, Tenn., saves all paper sanitary cups used at the soda fountain, turning them over to truck gardeners in that locality to be used as individual pots for starting seedling tomatoes, eggplants, cabbages, melons, etc. The seedlings are started indoors and afterward set out in garden or field in the cups, thereby giving plants an early start.

ONCE POOR, LABORER MAKES $2,000,000

Henry E. Pierce, an English shipowner, who started life in humble circumstances as a laborer in the harbor work at Messina, and afterward became one of the leading shipowners in Italy, has just died at his home near Naples, leaving a fortune of $20,000,000.

At the great Messina earthquake nine years ago all the other members of his family were killed.

GERMAN POISON GAS IN PRISONER'S LETTERS

Germans are credited, in reports received here, with injecting asphyxiating gas into letters sent home by prisoners in their camps. A woman living in the village of La Sicotiere was ill for several days recently after opening a letter from a French prisoner in Germany.

On the same day, it is said, another woman received a letter, also containing poison gas, from her husband, a captive in Bavaria. Other cases have been reported.

WOMAN GETS BIG POSITION

Miss Edith Talpey, of Edgewater avenue, Bayside, has been appointed chief chemist at the big plant of the General Chemical Company at Kingston, Ontario. For the past four years she has been working in the laboratory of the General Chemical Company at Long Island City. This is the first time in the history of the company that a woman has been placed in such a responsible position. Miss Talpey is a graduate of the Yonkers High School and of Barnard College, where she also took a post-graduate course.

OUR FIRST MEDICAL SCHOOL

The first medical school in America was founded in Philadelphia in 1765. This school was affiliated with the "College and Academy of Philadelphia," which afterward became the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to the launching of this institution the apprenticeship system still prevailed, except for the few who could afford to attend the European medical schools. Boys who wanted to practice the healing art usually apprenticed themselves to practitioners, and often performed the most menial duties while acquiring a haphazard medical education. Dr. John Morgan, who received his medical education in Europe, was the founder of the pioneer medical school, and was chosen its first head.

SEA-WATER BREAD

Along comes a French scientist who urges us to mix the dough used in baking bread with sea water, says the *Illustrated World*. He is Albert Saint Sernin, a naval pharmacist. He claims greater palatability and greater healthfulness will be the features of bread thus made.

But what are the reasons for this? Dough, he says, has a greater affinity for sea water because sea water contains magnesium chloride. This keeps the bread moist longer. Also, sea water contains a number of beneficial mineral substances.

To make the mixture, he recommends that the water be taken at some distance from shore to insure purity. The yeast is mixed with the usual fresh water; the dough with sea water.

COAL AND CONCRETE

In the summer of 1915 a concrete floor was laid in the storage bins of a Massachusetts coal yard. On most of this floor anthracite has been stored continuously since the date mentioned, and this part of the floor is in first-class condition to-day. But on a small section of the floor bituminous was stored; and in the spring of 1914, after being so used for nine months, this part of the concrete was found to be so decomposed as to be worthless. It was as soft as clay for a considerable depth. This phenomenon was attributed by the owners to chemical action set up by the soft coal or some of its constituents; and they have brought it to our attention in view of its very direct bearing upon the subject of concrete ships.

STOCK EXCHANGE 126 YEARS OLD

The first formal record in the possession of the New York Stock Exchange bears the date of May 17, 1792, and is an agreement between several brokers to trade with each other exclusively. This agreement was the foundation on which the great financial organization has been reared.

For a quarter of a century New York brokers carried on their activities under this compact, holding their meetings in a Wall Street coffee house and under a buttonwood tree at No. 68 Wall Street. In 1817 the brokers decided that a stronger organization was needed, and launched the New York Stock and Exchange Board. This name was used until 1863, when it was changed to New York Stock Exchange.

GREAT MEN'S PET HYMNS

Favorite hymns of famous men make an interesting catalog. Gladstone's special choice was "Praise to the Holy in the Highest," and it was sung at his funeral. Tennyson's favorite was Heber's "Holy, Holy, Holy."

One of Ruskin's preferences was "Jesu, Here from Sin Deliver," upon which he preached a little sermon to some 300 schoolchildren, his guests one afternoon, at Brantwood. Matthew Arnold's choice was "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (Watt's masterpiece), the third verse of which M. A. was overheard reciting to himself only an hour before his quite unexpected fatal seizure.

And Henry Ward Beecher declared: "I would rather have written 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul' than have the fame of all the kings that ever sat on the earth."

WILD BIRDS CALLED BY BARGE WHISTLE

A striking example of wild bird intelligence has been observed on the Panama Canal in connection with the underwater blasting that is carried on there. A barge has been especially equipped for drilling blast holes below the water and depositing charges in them. When a blast is ready the craft moves off to a safe distance, and before setting off the dynamite the barge whistle is blown several times to warn all vessels in the vicinity. Instantly numbers of wild birds may be seen coming from all directions, says *Popular Mechanics*, the reason being they have learned that many dead and stunned fish rise to the surface of the water following each explosion. To them this particular whistle is like a dinner gong. More remarkable still, they readily distinguish between this whistle and others. Canal workmen and natives also share in the harvest.

LAUNCH 79,195 TONS OF SHIPS IN A WEEK

Ten steel ships of 57,695 tons were launched by American yards in the week ending May 5, the Shipping Board announced to-day. Twelve steel ships of 80,180 tons were delivered to the board complete in the same period. Two of these were tankers of 10,475 tons each. Twelve months' production at the rate ships were launched during the week would total more than 4,500,000 tons.

The weekly totals are beginning to show the steady increase which officials of the Shipping Board predicted would come when the quantity production they sought had been made ready.

In order to keep busy the operating force organized by the San Francisco Shipbuilding Company, builders of the 7,500 concrete freighter *Faith*, the board plans to give the company contracts for nine additional ships of the same type. Permission to build ten concrete tank steamers has been given to a Pacific Coast corporation.

LONE WOMAN DEFIED TEUTON POWER

Of the many heroines who have won fame by their bravery and devotion in this war, not the least is Sister Julie, the French nun whose name is now a household word in every part of France. Sister Julie lived at Gerbervillier, a town in the Vosges, which was invaded by the Germans and set on fire in many places. When the Teutonic incendiaries approached the hospital where lay many wounded soldiers and civilians, Sister Julie, alone and unarmed, faced the intruders and by her imperious commands forced them to spare the building. Afterward, with a carving knife, she routed a battalion of the enemy who had attempted to seize food destined for her patients. Days passed; the tide of invasion was rolled back, and then a distinguished company, headed by the President of France and the Presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, came to Gerbervillier and pinned on the breast of Sister Julie the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

ROUMANIA'S ROYAL CROWN CAPTURED

When disaster overtook Roumanian arms, and the Germans under Mackensen and Falkenhayn swept through the country, it was not possible for King Ferdinand to remove all the crown jewels from Bucharest in time to prevent their falling into the hands of the invaders. Among the treasures captured by the kaiser's hordes was the Royal Crown of Roumania, which is regarded as the grimmest object of its kind in the world.

This crown was made by command of King Charles, predecessor of Ferdinand, from the steel of a Turkish gun captured at Plevna. On May 10, 1881, after this and the simple golden crown made for the queen had been consecrated by the Metropolitan, King Charles took his crown into his hands with the words: "I assume with pride this crown wrought from a cannon sprinkled with the blood of our heroes and consecrated by the church. I accept it as a symbol of the independence and power of Roumania."

PRUSSIA PLEDGED BELGIUM'S NEUTRALITY

The first treaty by which the neutrality of Belgium was guaranteed by the Powers was signed by representatives of Great Britain, France, Russia, Prussia, Austria and the Netherlands on April 19, 1839. This treaty arose out of a conference held in London on the Belgian question, by the decision of which the treaty of 1831, when Belgium gained its independence from Holland, was maintained.

The treaty of 1839 bound the powers signing it to guarantee a treaty signed the same day between the King of Belgians and the King of the Netherlands, providing that "Belgium forms an independent state of perpetual neutrality." When the Franco-Prussian war broke out the Belgians feared that their neutrality might be violated and appealed to England, with the result that another treaty of neutrality was negotiated and signed by both Prussia and France and, of course, by Great Britain. The present war has shown how well grounded were her fears.

OUR FIRST NAVAL ACADEMY

The first naval school in the United States was established at the old Boston Navy Yard a little over a century ago, the founder being Commodore William Bainbridge, who is known as the "Father of American Naval Construction," and who was born in Princeton, N. J. Bainbridge was captured by the French in 1798, during the naval conflicts between that country and the United States, and in 1803 he was held a prisoner for nine months by the Tripolitan pirates.

He fought gallantly in the last war between America and England, and after its conclusion induced the Washington authorities to open a training school for naval officers at Boston. In 1840, some years after the death of the founder of American naval education, a naval school was opened in the old naval asylum in Philadelphia, and here for a few years the midshipmen of the republic were instructed in the arts of warfare on the sea. The plan was so successful that it was decided to open a permanent naval academy. Annapolis, Md., was chosen as the site of the school, and there, over seventy years ago, the present United States Naval Academy was formerly opened.

PANAMA'S GREAT ARTIFICIAL LAKE

Gatun Lake, at the summit of the hill climbed by the Panama Canal, is the most important feature of the great waterway, and one of the largest artificial bodies of water in the world. This basin, dry land before the canal was built, extends two-thirds of the distance between the oceans and in it are stored the dangerous floods of the Chagres River.

Scarcely less remarkable is the reservoir constructed by a Pharaoh of the twelfth dynasty to regulate the flow of the Nile. It is now known as Lake Moeris, and covers sixty-three square miles. While but one-third the size of Gatun Lake, it is considered among the greatest engineering achievements of ancient times.

In addition to furnishing water to operate the locks of the canal, Gatun Lake is to be made a source of food supply. The Government Fisheries Bureau has stocked it with carp, sunfish, catfish and black bass. An odd feature is that its banks are almost inaccessible, even to small boats, because of the luxuriant growth of a kind of grass which sends out runners in all directions.

HUMAN TANKS IN WAR

No belligerent has shown more resourcefulness than the Italian in devising novel means of offense and defense. The Italian army was the only one to enter the war with a trench helmet and a steel chest-protector, and it is now provided with a more efficient body-shield than is possessed by any other of the warring nations.

Early in the war it was discovered by the Italians that many lives could be saved in skirmishing at close quarters if the soldiers carried or pushed bags of sand in front of them, and the present body-shield has been an outgrowth of that idea. They are made in the one-man and two-man type. The former are worn by infantry advancing in the open, attached to the shoulders by a pair of light steel arms, and are long enough to protect the head and vital organs of a man standing erect.

Lying at full length, or even crouched, it covers him completely. Each shield is pierced with a small, round eye-hole and an oblong loophole for firing from, both of which may be closed by a sliding door when not in use. The two-man shield is principally used in wire cutting. It is carried on the back of one man, who may also work his rifle from a loophole in the top, while a second man works a long wire cutter through a hole at the bottom. It is held up by short legs if the first man desires to move independently.

BOY SCOUTS TO HELP FIND WALNUT WOOD

The Boy Scouts of America have been called upon to assist in finding new supplies of walnut timber from which to make airplane propellers and gunstocks. On their hikes this spring and summer they are to search for walnut trees and report any found to the local scoutmaster. These reports will be forwarded to the Chief Executive of the Boy Scouts in New York and to Washington.

The Director of Lumber of the War Industries Board will advise the Ordnance Department and the Aircraft Production Division of the location of all trees found. Prompt steps will be taken by the War Department to remove all suitable trees thus located.

Anybody who has walnut trees and has not already made that fact known can help along the supply of walnut timber by communicating with the Director of Timber.

In order to make walnut go as far as possible, the Ordnance Department is testing laminated or built-up walnut gunstocks. Some of these have been dropped to city pavements from ten-story buildings, boiled forty-eight hours and subjected to other tests more severe than occur in actual warfare without affecting the glue which holds the pieces together. This method will permit manufacturers of gunstocks to utilize thin and narrow pieces of walnut wood which heretofore could not be used.

NEW GUN TO SHOOT BARBED WIRE

When the growth of our country brought to an end the day of the great open cattle ranges and John W. Gates produced barbed wire for fencing them off, no one could have dreamed of the part the new invention was to play in modern warfare. Its value in defense is now well understood, and it is proposed to employ it as a weapon of offense.

For this purpose a mortar has been invented from which reels of barbed wire may be fired into the ranks of advancing infantry. The gun has been tested at the Eddystone proving grounds at Lakehurst, N. J. A number have been sent abroad and may already have seen service.

A device by which wire may be cut with a bullet from either rifle or revolver has been invented by J. A. Steinmetz of Philadelphia. It is attached to the muzzle of the weapon and guides the strand into the path of the bullet and holds it until the trigger is pulled.

Trench fighters are always on the alert to keep their barbed wire in good order. Repairs are made at night, the stakes being driven home with mallets wrapped in cloth to deaden the sound. Two men carry the wire by means of a pole through the drum on which it is wound. Soldiers are equipped with heavy gloves and pliers for cutting the strands, but this is deadly work in the face of the enemy's fire. The English are using a curved steel shield, behind which a man on his hands and knees may approach and cut or repair the wires.

HOW COLORS AFFECT OUR SPIRITS

To use the word so popular just now, what "reactions" do colors bring about in you? Few have the sensitive eye of the artist, which is thrilled by all the varied opalescent tints of sunrise, but out of every average dozen of us, whether we know it or not, eleven are affected by colors—the twelfth man is color-blind.

We accepted white as proper for good spirits and black for the other sort, because that is the way they have been shown in art and the drama for many centuries. As to the subconscious influence of some of the primary colors—violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red—these explanations have been offered:

Red is exciting, partly because we associate it with the danger signal, with blood, and because it may stir some faint remembrance of the leaping flames and the confused shouts of the first fire we saw in childhood.

Green is soothing. It is the shade of the trees and grass which make the background for the peaceful summer landscape.

Yellow is the color of cheering sunlight and inclines us to good spirits and happiness.

Blue, the color of the sky and the open sea, suggests the mysteries which lie beyond.

Violet is depressing, even inspiring fear in the very nervous, and many theories have been offered in explanation of this effect. It is the color of the ominous clouds which come before the thunderstorm.

THE MAN WHO HAS "COVERED" 17 WARS

Perhaps no living man is better fitted to tell of the great improvements in implements and methods of destruction than Frederic Villiers, the famous English war correspondent, who, at the age of sixty-six, is "covering" his seventeenth war. He was born in London on April 23, 1852, and studied art in France. He was war artist for the *Graphic* in Serbia in 1876, and correspondent and artist with the Russian army during the Russo-Turkish war in 1877. The following year he was with the fighting men in Afghanistan, and then made a trip around the world. The Egyptian war next occupied his pen and brush, and in 1884 he was in the eastern Sudan, in the "broken square" at Tamai.

Abyssinia, the Nile, Khartum, in the Desert, with the Serbians invading Bulgaria in 1886, in Burma, across Canada with the governor general and a lecture tour of America, the Japanese army at Port Arthur, the Greek war against Turkey in 1897, Omdurman, the South African war, again with the Japs at Port Arthur, the Spanish army in Morocco, the war between Turkey and Italy, the two Balkan wars, the European conflagration—thus may be briefly outlined the career of this man whose life has been replete with adventure and excitement. His first experience in actual war was in Plevna, when Archibald Forbes was his companion. Villiers was the first to use a moving picture camera in war-time and the first to use a bicycle in campaigning. Scores of times he has had narrow escapes from death, but fate has always befriended him. During the present war he has made many battle-field sketches, and he is just as able a writer as he is an artist.

POCKET STOVES FOR HEATLESS DAYS

In their effort last January to combat the dangers of a heatless flat New Yorkers might have adopted the pocket stoves used in Japan. These are called kwairo, and are guaranteed to keep the person warm who carries one. The fuel is made of hemp stalks, from which the fiber has been taken, and the stalks then turned into charcoal. This charcoal is packed into a casing, something like a sausage and the stove fired as one may wish. When it is fairly lighted the charcoal burns without smoke or flame, giving forth a steady heat that would be most welcome to many a flat-dweller. In Japan enough fuel for a single charge costs one-sixth of a cent, and will last for three hours. But, of course, we would have to consider the pocket-stove trust, should these suggestions be adopted. There is no such trust at present, but no doubt it could be quickly formed.

During the Russo-Japanese War many a soldier of the Mikado kept himself from freezing by use of these pocket stoves. The Russians became acquainted with their virtues and the former Government of the Czar bought thousands of the miniature heaters for Russian soldiers in this war. The pocket braziers also are recommended for use in the treatment of colic, cramps, etc., answering the same purpose as a hot-water bottle.

These stoves are about the size of a pocket cigar case, and are usually made of tin or some finer metal. They do not become red hot, as might be supposed, but just pleasantly warm, and give forth a steady heat while the fuel lasts. Such a stove would be particularly desirable for commuters, who might reach home without being frozen to their seats, as is often the case at present.

In Japan it is a custom among aged or feeble persons to sleep with one of these stoves in their night clothing. Delicate children are sent to school with a little stove in their pocket, and those bound on a journey see to it that their stove is burning brightly before they start. If coal continues to advance in price, landlords no doubt will be interested in supplying their tenants with a pocket stove each and cutting off all heat.

EXPLORERS, TRAPPED, ESCAPE WILD MEN

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson, explorers and photographers, have arrived in San Francisco, after spending a year in the wilds of the South Sea Islands, where they induced cannibals and other varieties of savages to look pleasant and restrain their appetites while being photographed.

Many and varied were the experiences which befel them, and the least of which occurred on the Island of Mallicala, where Nagapate, the Chief High Sachem of the Big Number tribe, showed a fondness for their company and took steps to detain them. Nagapate already has between sixty and one hundred wives and a large number of citizens, so the Johnsons thought he could comfortably get along without them. Hence they escaped.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson first went to Sydney, Australia, and there chartered and outfitted a schooner for a voyage to the Solomons. They had police protection in all their visits to these islands, and had no harrowing experiences. But at Mallicala it was different. They had to visit Mallicala escorted only by eight savage and naked boatmen.

Johnson wanted his young and pretty wife to remain in the boat, but she refused and went with him.

"We were greeted by a party of savages on the shore, all armed with modern Winchester rifles and bows and arrows, the latter poisoned," says Johnson. "One of them spoke a few words of pidgin English. We asked for the chief and were told that he was not very far away, up on the hill. We started. Mrs. Johnson was clad in men's clothes—khaki—and carried, like myself, a revolver in each hip pocket. We traveled through the wilds for two or three miles and finally reached the top of the mountain.

"We stopped and started to unlimber the camera apparatus to take some pictures of the savages, who were the fiercest-looking human beings I had seen so far. Suddenly Nagapate appeared. He gave a curt order and our native boys dropped the camera and ran. Then, without a sound, there rose up out of the surrounding bush the troops and retainers of Chief Nagapate.

"We were surrounded. The chief gave some more orders and his men started to take Mrs. Johnson one way and myself another. I did not dare to draw my revolver and begin to fire, as we were too greatly outnumbered. It looked to me like we would be prepared for a royal banquet for the king.

"At this time there appeared in the bay a British man-of-war, carrying the French and British governor of the islands, who had heard we were visiting Mallicala and had come in search of us. Two white men, it seems, had lost their lives on Mallicala a year before, and this had led the authorities to become more watchful. The presence of the warship caused the savages to release us and we started back. But before we got back to the beach the vessel had sailed away, not being able to locate us, and we were again in danger. We finally reached the bay and found our small boat at the mouth of a river. We escaped safely, but lost one camera and some other paraphernalia. Mrs. Johnson kept her head well, but does not care to repeat the experience."

Johnson said that in the Solomons he found a race distinct from any other South Sea Islands people because of their diminutive size. The largest are four feet six inches tall, while the average is a little over three feet in height.

AMAZING OFFER TO YOU

So Easy to Learn K. I. SHORTHAND

SEND NOW $1

Here is an exceptional chance for any man, woman, girl or boy to learn the superior stenography, **K. I. Shorthand,** for money-earning or as an aid in one's own affairs.

People are astonished at the quickness with which they learn this simplified method. To convince yourself just **look at the specimen lesson at the right.** If you learn it within five minutes, the whole K. I. Shorthand System can be learned within a few hours, **by you,** in your own home—or elsewhere—in spare moments.

Stenographers earn $10.00 to $35.00 weekly.

The old systems of shorthand are cumbersome, difficult, take a great amount of time, and are costly to learn. From $25 to $100 is usually charged for teaching other methods. **You save a lot of time and a lot of money** by learning K. I. Shorthand.

We charge only $5.00 for the full K. I. Shorthand System, including all correspondence tuition. Nothing more for you to pay. You need send only a dollar now and pay the rest when the first ten lessons come to you.

Learn at home; you need no teacher to stand over you. Our lessons are **simple and easy.** You will enjoy this like a pastime. Learn in spare quarter or half hours and thereby, without any appreciable use of time, you become proficient.

A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU NOW.

TRY THIS LESSON

Here is *a* ∘ (Just a tiny circle) This is *t* —

So here is *at* ⌐ Here's *k* —

act ⌐ (Spelled as pronounced) *cat* (kat) ⌐

ng or *ing* ⌣ *acting* ⌐

TO WRITE "ACTING" IN THE ORDINARY WAY REQUIRES 21 PEN MOVEMENTS—ONLY 4 IN THE PERFECTED AND SIMPLIFIED K. I. SHORTHAND.

See how easily you have learned to use four signs in K. I. SHORTHAND. Quickly, like a pastime, you can learn the whole set of 30 and then **attain speed** so you may write in a quarter to a tenth of the time needed for writing in the ordinary way. Thus you may **write as rapidly as the words are spoken.**

Learn in 5 Minutes

THIS SPECIMEN LESSON—AND WHOLE COURSE IN 5 HOURS

See What They Say!

"Being a teacher, I recommend K. I. Shorthand System for which I have personally enrolled."—Miss M. O. McCLENNAN, 306 Park Ave., Tampa, Fla. *Numerous schools are teaching K. I. Shorthand.*

"I can write 75 to 82 words per minute after having studied K. I. Shorthand about two weeks."—JAMES FOLENG, 1109 Stafford Ave., Scranton, Pa.

"After spending less than three hours in studying K. I. Shorthand, I can write every word in the English language with it."—B. DIVER, 371 Helen Ave., Detroit, Mich.

"Speed is coming. I learned the K. I. Shorthand System in a couple of hours and am now transcribing page after page of a book—have no difficulty in reading my notes. I am pleased."—FROM A CLERGYMAN IN W. VA. *Many clergymen use and recommend K. I. Shorthand.*

"I have been fascinated with K. I. Shorthand from the first to the last lesson. It is so simple that a child could learn it."—GEORGIA L. FERGUSON, Pawhuska, Okla.

"I feel assured of my future success after studying your shorthand lessons. After three weeks of spare time study I now write and transcribe my notes with fair rapidity."—LEILA M. LA ROCHE, Yonges Island.

"K. I. Shorthand is an up-to-date system for business—exceedingly simple and exact. I recommend it highly for the man or woman who has only a little time to spare each day."—GIFFORD BAKER, 736 St. John's Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.

"I write words quite rapidly already, having completed the entire course in five days. I have taken a great interest in K. I. Shorthand and gladly recommend it."—BUTH SHEEK, 31 Rowan Ave., Detroit, Mich.

"It took me only a few hours to learn the principles of K. I. Shorthand. Your system is, indeed, very simple and easy to learn."—L. MCFARLAND, Merchants' and Planters' Bank, Arkadelphia.

"K. I. Shorthand is fascinating; the more I study it the better I like it; so plain and easy to understand." (This is part of a long letter written to us in K. I. Shorthand.)—H. F. GOODWIN, 160 Princess St., St. John, Can.

Many Uses for K. I. Shorthand

A stenographer uses K. I. Shorthand for taking employer's dictation of **letters, documents, reports, memoranda,** etc. Good pay. *Healthy, improving occupation.*

If you do not become a professional stenographer and typist as a vocation, use K. I. Shorthand as an important aid in your day's duties, taking down rapidly-spoken **telephone messages,** making **important notes** of instructions for your confidential **diary,** court and public speech **reporting,** etc.

How to Increase Your Earnings

1.—The young woman received the K. I. Shorthand System. 2.—She is learning easily and pleasantly. 3.—Surprises her employer by telling him she knows shorthand. 4.—Taking dictation. 5.—Increase in her pay envelope. 6.—Is now able to dress better and save more money. Her whole career improved.

Great Demand Now For Stenographers

There is a tremendous demand for stenographers—male and female—in government, professional and business positions. After learning K. I. Shorthand you acquire speed by simple practice.

AMAZING

One Tenth the Cost in Money
One Tenth the Time in Learning
GUARANTEED 100% VALUE

It is absolutely true that the eminent KING INSTITUTE (incorporated; $100,000 authorized capital) is offering the complete Course of Instruction in K. I. Shorthand at the astonishingly low charge of five dollars. Relatively, this tuition is worth fifty dollars, and even that sum would be cheaper and more advantageous to you than many systems that are being taught. Why? Because Shorthand is practical and is so quickly learned.

You need send only one dollar now if you agree to pay the rest—four dollars—when you receive ten lessons (Course of Instruction), after which the remaining instruction will be given to you, by mail, without any further charge.

No matter how young or how old you are, if you can learn the specimen lesson above, you should have no difficulty whatsoever in becoming proficient in the simplified K. I. SHORTHAND.

MONEY-BACK OFFER

We guarantee to return your money if you cannot learn K. I. Shorthand. What can be fairer? We take the risk because we know the remarkable value of K. I. Shorthand. Thirty days allowed for you to ask for your money back after the final lesson or letter of advice from King Institute.

A BIG DIFFERENCE

In some localities it is the law that a person must learn engineering before he is allowed to run an automobile. Yet, thousands of persons who never took a long course of engineering have learned within a few hours how to run an auto. Apply this comparison to the difference between learning the complications of an old system of shorthand when you can do just as well, for all practical purposes, by the simplified K. I. Shorthand

On the next page is an Enrollment Coupon that you may fill out and send to King Institute, Inc., with either $5.00 or $1.00; or you may request the Brochure which gives further information. Do not let this opportunity pass by. It is likely to mean a complete change in your career—untold contentment.

Learn K. I. Shorthand in Five Evenings

"I found every lesson simple, and easily learned. I am proud to tell you this."—ELISE DAVIDSON, R. D. 2, Fortson, Ga.

"The course of K. I. Shorthand is very easy, indeed, as compared to others."—MRS. SILAS SHEETZ, Wilmington, N. C.

Legions of persons, both sexes, all ages, praise the remarkable simplified K. I. Shorthand.

Address

King Institute

154 EAST 32d STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Mention this paper when writing.

Easy to learn K. I. Shorthand and it should be easier still to obtain a position. The pay of a beginner is often $10 to $15 weekly, while thousands of stenographers and typists are earning above $100 per month. Why not you?

Our correspondence tuition charge of $5.00 includes aid—if you need it—in securing a position. ENROLL NOW!

SEND NOW $1

Do not miss this exceptional opportunity. Mail your remittance of $1.00 (or you may send the full amount of $5.00 if convenient) to KING INSTITUTE, 154 E. 32nd St., NEW YORK, N. Y. It is necessary to mention this paper when writing.

Your name will be enrolled and you will become entitled to all privileges of tuition until you have fully learned.

ENROLL NOW

This announcement may not appear again until we increase our price so do not overlook this grand opportunity. Send that dollar NOW. Cut out this advertisement and show to others. We will send a booklet free on request.

"Talk as fast as you like. I am taking it down in K. I. Shorthand."

Try These K. I. Shortcuts

Association

This word takes 34 pen movements in ordinary writing—only 2 in K. I. Shorthand. See how many times you can write it while your friend writes in the usual way.

Notwithstanding

Takes 54 movements in longhand; only 3 in K. I. Shorthand. The whole method is surprisingly easy to learn.

Representative

Takes 41 movements in longhand; only 2 in K. I. Shorthand. Learners, all ages, are delighted with their quickly attained speed.

CUT OUT OR COPY THIS COUPON

TO THE
KING INSTITUTE
154 East 32nd St., New York, N. Y.

Please enroll me as a student to learn K. I. Shorthand by mail. **I enclose $1** as first payment and agree to pay $4 when your Course of Instruction (10 lessons) comes to me. There is to be **nothing further for me to pay** and I am to be entitled to all necessary special lessons and advice. **If I cannot learn, you are to return my money.**

Name and Address.....

.....

.....

ED-101

ALL THESE FREE

Gold plated **Secret Locket** and **Neck Chain**, Gold plated **Pendant** and **Neck Chain**, Gold plated **Bracelet** and 4 Gold plated **Rings**. 1918 designs, fresh from the factory. **ALL Given FREE** to any one for selling only 12 pieces of our Jewelry at 10c each. Write to-day. **P. S. Dale Mfg. Co., Providence, R. I.**

FRECKLES

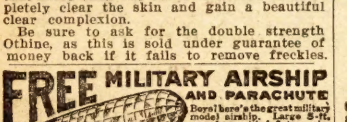
Now Is the Time to Get Rid of These Ugly Spots.

There's no longer the slightest need of feeling ashamed of your freckles, as Othine—double strength—is guaranteed to remove these homely spots.

Simply get an ounce of Othine—double strength—from your druggist, and apply a little of it night and morning and you should soon see that even the worst freckles have begun to disappear, while the lighter ones have vanished entirely. It is seldom that more than one ounce is needed to completely clear the skin and gain a beautiful clear complexion.

Be sure to ask for the double strength Othine, as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove freckles.

FREE MILITARY AIRSHIP AND PARACHUTE



Boys! here's the great military model airship. Large 5-ft. gas bag with infantry, gas parachute and dropping device. Can drop "bombs." Will fly for miles a height of 1000 ft. and can be used over and over again. Great chance for boys to study aerial warfare. Just order 12 packages of Bingo perfumed frosting wax, sell at 10c a pkg. No trouble to sell. Return money and this wonderful airship is yours. Send today. We trust you. Boys, if you want real sport send for this airship.

BINGO CO., DEPT. 358 BINGHAMTON N. Y.

DRINK

If you know some one who drinks whisky, beer, gin or any other alcoholic beverages, to his injury, you may obtain FREE, a very helpful book by writing to Edw. J. Woods, WP-101, Station F, New York, N. Y. It shows how to conquer drink habit.

Send for my book

Strong Arms and Military Shoulders

for 25c, coin or stamps.

Illustrated with twenty full page halftone cuts, showing exercises that will quickly develop, beautify, and gain great strength in your shoulders, arms and hands without any apparatus.

Equal to any Mail Course on Strength.

MUSCLE BUILDER

A steel spring exerciser and chest expander with a complete course of twenty-four selected exercises for developing all the muscles of the body. It is equal to any $3.00 exerciser. My price for a short time only $1.00.

Prof. Anthony Barker 1780 Barker Building 127 W. 42d St., New York

GAIN WEIGHT

Get a box of Woods V Tabules at the drug store. Safe and reliable. Guaranteed weight increase or your money back. Improve health, strength; gain efficiency, personality, normal figure, vigor—enjoy life. Many report 5 to 30 pounds increase. Prove for yourself.

SNUFF HABIT

If you are addicted to this pernicious habit, which is causing you nervousness, irritability, headaches, heart weakness and other misery, write to E. J. Woods, WR-101, Station F, New York for information how to overcome the addiction quickly and easily.

Fat Is Fatal

A Burden of Unhealthy Fatness Shortens Life. Reduce Weight Comfortably.

Would you like to reduce your weight ten to sixty pounds in a simple, safe, comfortable way?

Do you want to become healthier, to look younger, to be sprightly, to possess a good figure without wrinkles or flabbiness?

Then stop harmful drugging; do not follow any starvation plan or tedious exercising, but adopt the delightful home method.

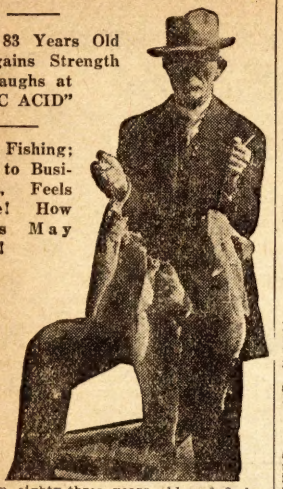
Stand by your window or in the open air each morning and evening, taking ten long, deep breaths. Inhale through the nose with the mouth closed; exhale with the mouth open. Take oil of korein four times daily and follow the other simple directions that come with it.

You will positively reduce your weight, or you will receive a forfeiture in cash. Go to the drug store and get some oil of korein to-day, or write Korein Company, NC-101, Station F, New York, N. Y., for free book "Reduce Weight Happily." The guarantee is absolute.

Finds Cure For Rheumatism After Suffering 50 Years

Now 83 Years Old —Regains Strength and laughs at "URIC ACID"

Goes Fishing; Back to Business, Feels Fine! How Others May Do It!



"I am eighty-three years old and I doctored for rheumatism ever since I came out of the army over fifty years ago. Like many others, I spent money freely for so-called 'cures,' and I have read about 'Uric Acid' until I could almost taste it. I could not sleep nights or walk without pain; my hands were so sore and stiff I could not hold a pen. But now I am again in active business and can walk with ease or write all day with comfort. Friends are surprised at the change."

HOW IT HAPPENED.

Mr. Ashelman is only one of thousands who suffered for years, owing to the general belief in the old, false theory that "Uric Acid" causes rheumatism. This erroneous belief induced him and legions of unfortunate men and women to take wrong treatments. You might just as well attempt to put out a fire with oil as to try and get rid of your rheumatism, neuritis and like complaints, by taking treatment supposed to drive Uric Acid out of your blood and body. Many physicians and scientists now know that Uric Acid never did, never can and never will cause rheumatism; that it is a natural and necessary constituent of the blood; that it is found in every new-born babe, and that without it we could not live!

HOW OTHERS MAY BENEFIT FROM A GENEROUS GIFT.

These statements may seem strange to some folks, because nearly all sufferers have all along been led to believe in the old "Uric Acid" humbug. It took Mr. Ashelman fifty years to find out this truth. He learned how to get rid of the true cause of his rheumatism, other disorders and recover his strength from "The Inner Mysteries," a remarkable book that is now being distributed free by an authority who devoted over twenty years to the scientific study of this particular trouble. If any reader of the "Mystery Magazine" wishes a copy of this book that reveals startling facts overlooked by doctors and scientists for centuries past, simply send a post-card or letter to H. P. Clearwater, 534 Water street, Hallowell, Maine, and it will be sent by return mail without any charge whatever. Send now. You may never get this opportunity again. If not a sufferer yourself, hand this good news to some friend who may be afflicted.

DOUBLE CHIN Reduce it to beautiful firm white flesh by using oil of korein, and following directions therewith. But at the drug store.

Wonderful Victory Over BALDNESS

HAIR GROWN ON MR. BRITTAIN'S BALD HEAD BY INDIANS' MYSTERIOUS OINTMENT

Now Has Prolific Hair and Will Give True Recipe Free; It is Scientifically Verified

My head at the top and back was absolutely bald. The scalp was shiny. An expert said that he thought the hair roots were extinct, and there was no hope of my ever having a new hair growth.

Yet now, at the age of 66, I have a luxuriant growth of soft, strong, lustrous hair! No trace of baldness.

Indians' Secret of Hair Growth

At a time when I had become discouraged at trying various hair lotions, tonics, specialists' treatments, etc., I came across, in my travels, a Cherokee Indian "medicine man" who had an elixir that he guaranteed would grow my hair. Although I had no faith, I gave it a trial. To my amazement a light fuzz soon appeared. It developed, day by day, into a regular healthy growth and ere long my hair was as prolific as in my youthful days.

That I was amazed and happy is expressing my state of mind mildly.

Hair Grew Luxuriantly

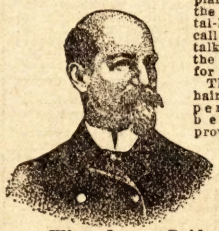
Obviously, the hair roots had not been dead, but were dormant in the scalp, awaiting the fertilizing potency of the mysterious pomade.

It became my sudden determination to possess the recipe or secret if I could. Having used my most persuasive arguments which convinced the aged savant of my sincerity and that he had only fairness to expect from me, I succeeded in gaining the secret recipe by giving him a valuable rifle in exchange.

I Put the Secret Away

My regular business took all my time, however, and I was compelled to forego my plans to introduce the wonderful kotai-ko (which I call for short kotalko) and I put the secret aside for some years.

That my own hair growth was permanent has been amply proved.



When I was Bald.

My honest belief is that hair roots rarely die even when the hair falls out through dandruff, fever, excessive dryness or other disorders. I am convinced, and am sure many scientists will agree, that the hair roots become imbedded within the scalp, covered by hard skin, so that they are like bulbs or seeds in a bottle which will grow when fertilized. Shampoos (which contain alkalis) and hair lotions which contain alcohol are enemies to the hair, as they dry it, making it brittle.

Plenty of Hair Now.

The Secret Now Revealed

Recently I was induced, while on a business trip to London, to introduce kotalko, the Indian hair elixir. It met with an immediate demand and has since been introduced throughout England and France, where, despite the war, it is having a great sale. Its popularity comes chiefly from the voluntary endorsements of users. Many persons—men, women and children—are reporting new hair growth. Some cases were really more extraordinary than my own. For instance, a lady reported that kotalko grew a beautiful supply of blond hair (her natural shade) after her head had been completely bald since a fever nine years previously and she had worn a wig ever since.

A military officer had a bald spot which had been growing larger for some time. Within a few weeks it was completely covered.

I could mention numerous examples. Now, having made arrangements here, I intend to supply kotalko, according to the genuine Indians' formula to whomsoever wishes to obtain it.

Recipe Given Free

The recipe I shall be pleased to mail, free. Address: John Hart Brittain, BE-101, Station F, New York, N. Y. When you have grown new hair please send me a letter giving the facts for my files.

How to Make a Hit

Learn to escape from any handcuffs. We teach you the secret. You can positively do it. Give exhibitions. Make money. No confederates or fake handcuffs. The HANDCUFF KING'S SECRET will be revealed FREE if you mail us only 30 cents, stamps, for 3 Marvel Menders, useful at home, in kit, factory, camp—everywhere. ALBRO SOCIETY, AB-101, Station F, New York.

TOBACCO HABIT CONQUERED easily in 3 days! Improve health, prolong your life. Relieve stomach or kidney trouble, hoarseness, headaches, irritability, nervous worry, heart weakness. Avoid blindness! Gain lasting vigor, calm nerves, better memory, clear eyes, superior mental strength. Banish spells of melancholy; avoid collapse. If you chew, dip snuff or smoke pipe, cigarettes, cigars, get my interesting free book. Just what you have been looking for. Proved worth weight in gold to others: why not you? Overcome nicotine habit, start anew and be genuinely happy. Book mailed FREE. Address: EDWARD J. WOODS, WG 101, Station F, New York, N. Y.

BE SURE TO READ

"Moving Picture Stories"

A Weekly Magazine Devoted to Photoplays and Players.

PRICE SIX CENTS PER COPY

The Best Film Magazine on Earth

FOR SALE ON ALL NEWS-STANDS.

Magnificent Colored Cover Portraits of Prominent Screen Performers!

32 PAGES OF READING **OUT EVERY FRIDAY**

Each Number Contains Portraits and Biographies of Actors and Actresses—Six Stories of the Best Films on the Screens—Elegant Half-tone Scenes from the Plays—Interesting Articles About Prominent People in the Films—Doings of Actors and Actresses in the Studios—Lessons in Scenario Writing—Poems, Jokes and every bright Feature of Interest in Making Moving Pictures.

THIS LITTLE MAGAZINE GIVES YOU MORE FOR YOUR MONEY THAN ANY OTHER SIMILAR PUBLICATION ON THE MARKET.

Its authors are the very best that money can procure; its profuse illustrations are exquisite, and its special articles are by the greatest experts in their particular line. No amount of money is spared to make this publication the very best of its kind in the world. Buy a copy NOW from your newsdealer, or send us 6 cents in money or postage-stamps, and we will mail you, postage free, any number you desire.

HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, **166 West 23d Street, New York City**